MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

#393

FEB 2016

2015 YEAR END TOP TEN LISTS

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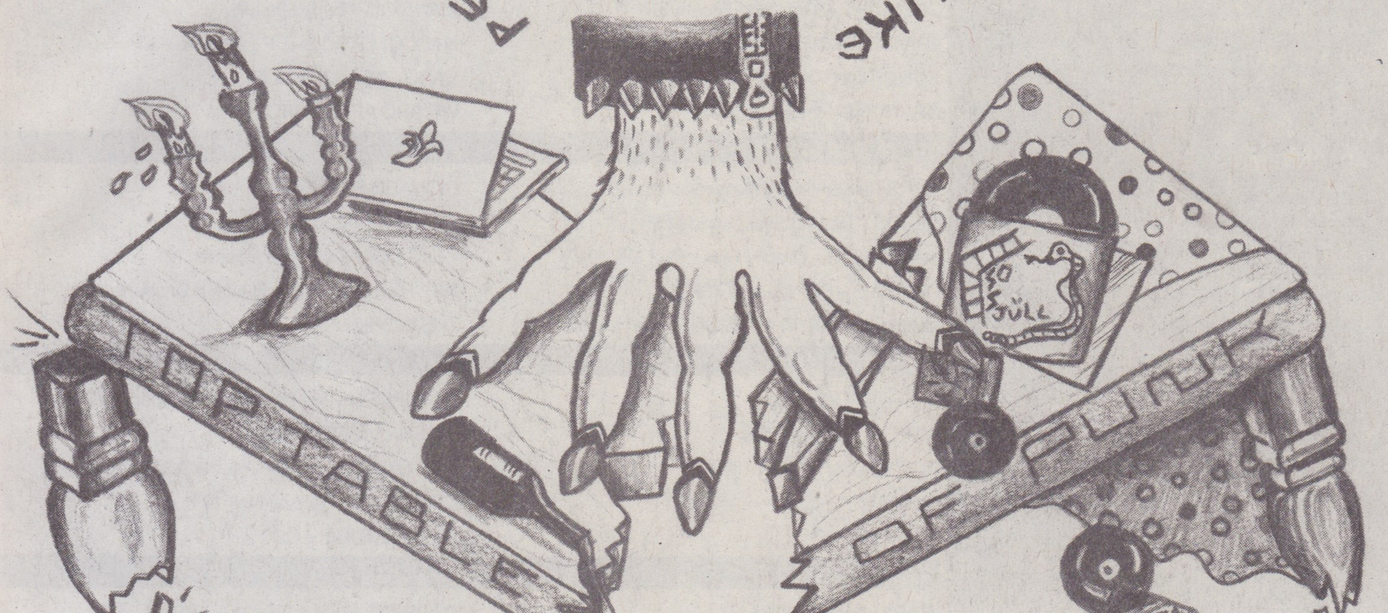

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL TOP 10

For what it's worth, here're some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

GRACE AMBROSE

- INDEX – Demo 2012 EP
- CØNDITIØN – Actual Hell 12"
- SANG – Món Oblidat EP
- KITCHEN'S FLOOR – Battle of Brisbane LP
- HARRY PUSSY – LP / THE GIRLS – LP
- SUBTRACTIONS – It's Exposed EP
- MANSION – LP / MANATEEES – LP
- SNOB – EP / SIN MOTIVO – EP
- ALIENATION – 2015 Mini-LP 12"
- LYSOL – live / VACANT LIFE – live

LYDIA ATHANASOPOULOU

Greek Malaka takes off...

MATT BADENHOP

- BURNING KITCHEN – Discography 2xLP
- DEZERTER – both LPs
- CULT VALUES – CS
- INDEX – Demo 2012 EP
- MUERTE – LP
- NADZOR – Your Tolerance Is Shit... LP
- NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – Triumph Over Adversity CD
- ORATIONS – Incantations EP
- SIN ORDEN – Ha Llegado el Momento EP
- SUBTRACTIONS – It's Exposed EP

WILL BLOMQUIST

- LIFE – Violence, Peace and Peace Research LP
- ONMACHT – The Long Breath EP
- ERA DEL VACIO – LP
- CØNDITIØN – Actual Hell 12"
- ORATIONS – Incantations EP
- SIN ORDEN – EP / SNOB – EP
- MANSION – Early Life LP
- NARCOLEPTICS – EP / GEROS – EP
- SANG – Món Oblidat EP
- WIZARD APPRENTICE – live

MITCH CARDWELL

- LIFE STINKS – You'll Never Make It LP
- GEROS – Genocide or Suicide EP
- MANATEEES – Croc N My Pocket LP
- NO BAILS – Bombs Away EP
- MEERCAZ AND THE VISIONS – Get Muzzled LP
- RICHARD PAPIERCUTS – IF LP
- MANSION – Early Life LP
- SEX TIDE – Vernacular Splatter 12"
- KITCHEN'S FLOOR – Battle of Brisbane LP
- THE WORLD – live

ROBERT COLLINS

- DEPRESSOR – live
- ERA DEL VACIO – live
- BUSTED OUTLOOK – live
- EXHAAUST – CS
- MUERTE – LP
- SIN ORDEN – Ha Llegado el Momento EP
- SIRENA VICTIMA – CS
- LEFTÖVER CRACK – Volume III LP/CD
- CØNDITIØN – Actual Hell 12"
- PETER STUBB – CS

LAYLA GIBBON

- INDEX – Demo 2012 EP
- SANG – Món Oblidat EP
- KITCHEN'S FLOOR – Battle of Brisbane LP
- BADABOUM – LP
- FATE VS FREE WILLY – New Dead End LP
- HARRY PUSSY – LP / THE GIRLS – LP
- MANSION – Early Life LP
- BELLS OF.. – 00/85 LP
- CYCLOPS – LP / UTAH JAZZ – LP
- SUBTRACTIONS – EP / MANATEEES – LP

DAN GOETZ

- CØNDITIØN – Actual Hell 12"
- SUBTRACTIONS – It's Exposed EP
- BURNING KITCHEN – Discography 2xLP
- SIN MOTIVO – "Laberintos / Tierra del Deseo"
- INDEX – Demo 2012 EP
- KITCHEN'S FLOOR – Battle of Brisbane LP
- ALIENATION – 2015 Mini-LP 12"
- SANG – Món Oblidat EP
- MAMA – Speed Trap EP
- FRUIT PUNCH – The 7" Collection CD

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TOP 10

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GREG HARVESTER

HARRY PUSSY – LP	MAMA – Speed Trap EP
BASEMENT BENDERS – Lydiad LP	LYSOL – CS
CLEANSING WAVE – Crude EP	SHELLSHAG – Why'd I Have To Get So High? LP
BIG CRUX – CS	THE FLOOR ABOVE – CS
V/A – Bughouse I CS	CRAZY BUGS – CS

KENNY KAOS

THE GENERATORS – Welcome to the End LP	ZEX – "Fear No Man / I Didn't Know"
JOUST – "Sprouting Seeds / Ouroboros"	SUBTRACTIONS – It's Exposed EP
SILENT NOISE – "I've Been Hurt / Heart to Heart"	USELESS EATERS – Live at Vacation LP
GROSS POINTE – Bad Seed EP	ACTiVE MINDS / THISCLOSE – EP
THE MODERNS – The Year of Today EP	PAMPERS – Right Tonight EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

TY SEGALL – Ty Rex LP / MANATEEES – LP	LIFE STINKS – LP / INDEX – EP
WOLFMANHATTAN PROJECT – "Smells Like You" 45	MEERCAZ AND THE VISIONS – Get Muzzled LP
SANG – Món Oblidat EP	KITCHEN'S FLOOR – Battle of Brisbane LP
KID CONGO & THE PINK MONKEYBIRDS – 45	ZEX – "Fear No Man / I Didn't Know"
HELTA SKELTA – Beyond The Black Stump LP	SUBTRACTIONS – It's Exposed EP

RAY LUJAN

ANGELIC UPSTARTS – Bullingdon Bastards CD	NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – Triumph Over Adversity CD
BASEMENT BENDERS – Lydiad LP	ORATIONS – EP / THE PONCHES – Hum CD
THE DUTCH RUDDERS – On Verra CD	SONNY VINCENT – Bizarro Hymns CD
HELTA SKELTA – Beyond The Black Stump LP	AGNOSTIC FRONT – live
MAMA – Speed Trap EP / NERVOUS TALK – LP	BARB WIRE DOLLS – live

ROTTEN RON READY

INDEX – Demo 2012 EP	ALIENATION – 2015 Mini-LP 12"
PISS – Pubertala Uppror EP	CØNDITIØN – Actual Hell 12"
SEI TO SHI – Vida y Muerte EP	PMS 84 – Creep EP
MAMA – Speed Trap EP	SCALPED – Progress EP
MUERTE – LP	FRIED EGG – The Incredible Flexible Egg flexi EP

FRED SCHRUNK

BURNING KITCHEN – Discography 2xLP	PISS – Pubertala Uppror EP
SANG – Món Oblidat EP	MANSION – Early Life LP
INDEX – Demo 2012 EP	THE GIRLS – Punk-Dada Pulchritude LP
SHELLSHAG – Why'd I Have To Get So High? LP	LIFE STINKS – You'll Never Make It LP
BASEMENT BENDERS – Lydiad LP	UTAH JAZZ – Ivory Wave LP

LENA TAHMASSIAN

BURNING KITCHEN – Discography 2xLP	NERVOUS TALK –LP
GROSS POINTE – Bad Seed EP	PAMPERS – Right Tonight EP
INDEX – Demo 2012 EP	TY SEGALL – Ty Rex LP
THE MODERNS – The Year of Today EP	SEX TIDE – Vernacular Splatter 12"
SANG – Món Oblidat EP	MUERTE – LP

ELI WALD

KITCHEN'S FLOOR – Battle of Brisbane LP	ALIENATION – 2015 Mini-LP 12"
SANG – Món Oblidat EP	THE GIRLS – Punk-Dada Pulchritude LP
INDEX – Demo 2012 EP	MAMA – EP / THE GEROS – EP
SIN MOTIVO – "Laberintos / Tierra del Deseo"	LIFE STINKS – LP / USELESS EATERS – LP
CØNDITIØN – Actual Hell 12"	PISS – Pubertala Uppror EP

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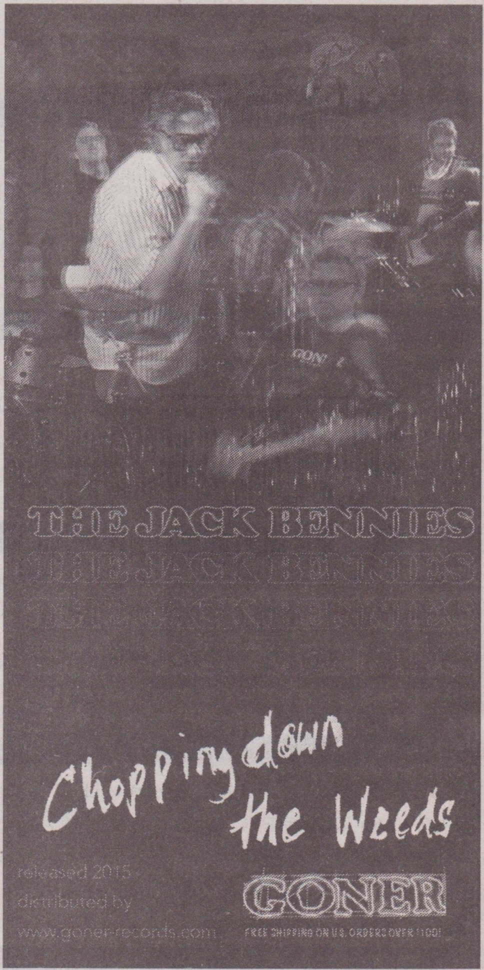

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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

Just the other day I got a 7" in the mail to review for my zine. It's the new Crazy and the Brains 45 on the Baldy Longhair label. I noticed something interesting on the back of it, though. Next to the label logo there was an additional logo for Converse Rubber Tracks. Yeah, the same company that's been the official un-official shoe of 1-4-5 rock'n'roll for the past 40 years. It confused me, and I was wondering if Converse (well, Nike, really) was pulling a Scion and starting their own record label. But when I looked into it, it doesn't seem as cut and dry as that.

Apparently Converse/Nike has deals with various recording studios around the world (40 countries!) where bands can "apply" to get free studio time to record, ostensibly for Converse Rubber Tracks. I'm not exactly sure how it works out, but it looks like you get to keep the rights to your music and recordings. It seems that you're not even obligated to credit Rubber Tracks. If you go to the website you can see a list of all the bands that have participated in this. They apparently also sponsor shows—but so does every company these days, it seems. While my zine will review this record (with a lengthy note about the Converse Rubber Tracks aspect of it), I was wondering what y'all over at *MRR* think about the whole thing. I'm quite sure you won't review it, but I was wondering what you thought of this whole angle that Nike is doing. They're not putting out music, just facilitating the recording of it in exchange for extra promotion. I can see this being really appealing for a lot of bands who might not be able to afford to get into a decent studio—or an actual studio at all. Living in globalized late capitalism pretty much makes everything and everyone a commodity, and as the popular meme goes, there is no such thing as ethical consumption under late capitalism. Is doing a recording like this "selling out?" You're not actually signing a corporate deal, you're kinda just using them. Or is it all the more insidious because no one has to know? Baldy Longhair is a rad and legit label, and is inarguably DIY…so what's y'all's perspective on their part of all of this? We're living in weird times, fersher, and stuff like this just seems to make all the more confusing.

—Ray Martinez

Hey Ray,

Not sure what's confusing about this. Who gains the most when a band associates itself with a brand? Certainly not the musicians. It's a vampiric relationship predicated on corporations trying to align themselves with underground culture. Of course Converse (or Scion or Red Bull or Sourpatch Kids or….) doesn't want you to see the connection between what you're doing and the development of their brand—that's not how having a countercultural image (to people in the norm world) and still being a multi-national corporation works!

Something like Rubber Tracks capitalizes on false promises—if we have these recordings and this "extra promotion" our band will sell more records, will play bigger shows, will reach more people. I understand being duped into thinking that any of that is true to any real extent, but at the end of the day, what you're actually doing by recording there is providing content for their website. It's a form of twisted native advertising, that they're getting for much less money than if they used traditional marketing means. They don't care if their name appears on the 300 copies of the records you inevitably press because they operate on a much larger scale. The cost of studio time is like pennies in the couch to a company worth close to 20 billion dollars.

People can delude themselves into thinking they are getting one over on a corporation, but usually the harder it is to ascertain what a company is getting out of a situation, the more insidious it is. Whether you're the band participating or the label condoning it, you're complicit. Punks have been recording music without acquiescing to corporate money since the beginning of punk time—just 'cause it's easy and cheap doesn't always mean you should go and do it.

—Grace

P.S. I'd check some facts before you write about this in your zine. They have studios in eight countries, mostly in North America and Western Europe. Big difference. I bet you got the number forty from the list of countries you had to choose from when you arrived on the site. They ask you what country you live in so they know how to market to you more precisely and so that they can gather data about who to market to in the future.

Did your love letter to Teen Man get sent back? We misprinted the address of his penthouse. If you want to reach Uranium Club (featured in MRR *#391), send a SASE to 3204 3*[rd] *Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55408.*

In the tour diary in MRR *#392, we accidentally conflated G.L.O.S.S.'s October San Jose gig and their February one. Profile, Beast, and Jr. Adelberg played the more recent show.*

Live in the Bay Area? Interested in getting involved with this magazine? We're looking for zine, demo, and record reviewers and also for some people to help with mail order and general house maintenance. Get in touch: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com

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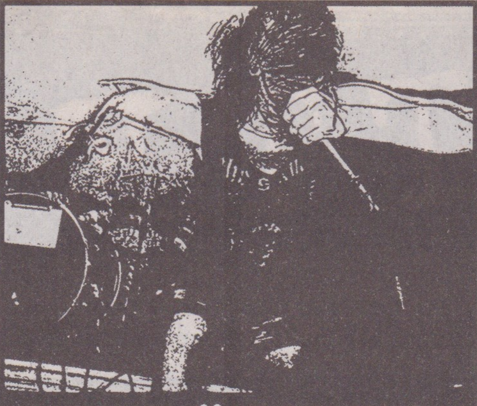

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COLUMNS

It was weird because you look at something like Gmail, this form of technology that's so dominant and central to the culture and so corporate that it seems like it's incorruptible. It seems possible that someone might hack your account, steal your identity or pull some other kind of high-tech fraud that would make for a killer episode of *Law & Order*, but you never really expect...weird shit. Like sweet, reassuring emails from yourself, from the future.

It was unnerving. If they had been vulgar, or threatening, you might have had a paradigm for them already in place—a safe folder in your head ready and waiting for you to file them in like some fucked up but predictable spam and then forget about it. But these were not that. They were specifically about things in your life, stuff you cared about, and they basically just reassured you that the things that were stressing you out would be resolved. That shit was going to work out. And they came from you, yourself, in the future. That was the thing—you'd get an email from your own email address, from your own name, from a date anywhere from a couple years in the future to like, a decade or two. Sometimes more. You'd hear about a kid who got an email from himself fifty years in the future, talking about how he was gonna struggle for a while but, eventually, everything was going to be pretty good.

It was a week between the time when people started getting these bizarre / mundane emails from the future and the time when we started talking about it. A whole week of everybody walking around feeling solitarily weird, wondering if maybe time travel was a thing somehow? Like everybody—well, not everybody, but everybody who trusted Google enough to give the tech giant all their personal information—was just weirded out by themselves for a week by these emails that were, yes, maybe worded a little opaquely, and were still so specific and reassuring that you couldn't help but feel kind of fucked up.

Once people started talking about it, you started seeing news stories about it. Stories hollering about "Hackers!" and "Identity Theft!" and all the other predetermined narratives we have for cybercrimes, which was the closest to the truth that the media got. It wasn't long until it got solved.

Obviously, they weren't actually emails from ourselves from the future.

The police, or whoever, tracked the whole thing back to these two Black trans girls in Savannah who had done some metaphysically leet hack of, like, all of Google, had gotten access to everyone's information, and had written a program that automatically mined everybody's emails and browsing and shopping histories and looked at what was important to you, figured out what was stressful for you, and then generated those emails automatically. Post-dated.

This, of course, was illegal. But obviously most of us thought that what they'd done was awesome—the kind of thing that cracks the scales off your eyes, the calluses off your nerves, and reminds you that the world is a weird place and not the determinist capitalist hellscape we all experience it as every day. But the FBI and the Georgia police still did their best to do the same things to those girls that they do to every Black person every time they get a chance to.

The funny thing is that that wasn't the end of the story. Those girls had a manifesto that didn't leak until much, much later, and even when it was finally made public, once things in the world had finally started to get awesome, the media's dismissal of their work—for the dual sins of mysticism and the use of terms like "white supremacist colonial kyriachy" and "fuckshit"—already felt like the last gasp of a toxic, but thankfully, dying culture.

Because their idea had worked. Before they'd been busted, when we'd all been walking around thinking that maybe we were literally getting time travel emails from the future, certain very real things had started to happen. Things involving, like, telekinesis, psychic communication, levitation, and that stupid violent empathy thing that happens at the end of that old movie, *The Crow*. You fucking name it.

It was like that thing when you're a kid, and like, after you see *Peter Pan* or something, you think, "I know that I could fly, if I just believe it hard enough." Only, you can't figure out how to believe it hard enough. You live in a culture with these laws of science and you learn as a kid that it's not okay to break laws. Of course, then you start smoking weed in high school, you learn about driving faster than the speed limit, and you develop an adult relationship with sociocultural legal laws, but you never go back and revisit your childhood skepticism of the "natural laws."

Until you start getting very kind emails from yourself in the future.

What those girls did was to crack open the window just enough for us to remember what it's like to breathe. Well, for some of us to remember what it's like to breathe. They're both named Ashley and live in the biggest fucking mansion you've ever seen and they are still very much in love with each other. Obviously not everyone was so affected. But for those of us who needed to believe that life didn't have to be this racist, classist trash heap, where scarcity and hierarchicalism characterize everything, and heroes like the Ashleys get time in jail and worse for their work. For those of us who did not have the privilege of wanting to accept the world the way that it was, the privilege of believing that nothing would have to change, on a large scale, for things to ever be okay—and there were a lot of us—it was enough.

Before the police showed up and did their job, some of us started thinking, "Okay, if time travel is possible, what else is possible?" Before the police showed up and did their job, a whole lot of us found out.

Colin Atrophy's 2015 Top Ten
(in chronological order)

1) Started this column. I turned in my first column on January 4, 2015! It was my Best of 2014 list and it had way less stuff than this one. Listen! It's really exciting to write this for you all every month. I feel like lately it's been a little "blah" because I've been moving, retired, and not really thinking too hard about writing. But, I have some exciting stuff starting next year that I think will give me plenty of fodder for the charming self-reflection and ruminations on the minutiae of life that you've come to expect from me. Mostly, maybe I want to use this space to express my gratitude to Grace and the *Maximum Rocknroll* people for having me and for everyone else who reads it every month! Thank you so much!

2) Hired an impersonator to sing to me on my birthday. In my last neighborhood, in Queens, there was this guy I would notice around who had dyed black hair and was kinda like,

Queens's Dummy Marky Ramone aesthetic. Sometimes, he was dressed like a Swingin' Sea Captain and other times he was dressed like a Swingin' Guy At A Luau. He was always at the corner store buying eight Mr. Goodbars, which intrigued me. One day, I was hanging around this new bookstore that my friend Cosmo and some other people were about to open in the neighborhood, and in walked my neighborhood mystery man. He was walking through the store running his fingers along the spines of the books and he kept looking up at me like, "Can you believe this shit?" Finally, he was like, "What the hell is this place?!" sounding legitimately dumbfounded. Cosmo was all, "It's a bookstore." He goes, "Pretty fuckin' low brow neighborhood for a bookstore, huh?" What an angel!

He was holding a big stack of CD-Rs and after a lengthy silence he slid one along the counter. It had a picture of him dressed as Elvis. "I'm a triple impersonator," he told us. "I do the big three. Elvis. Tom Jones. And Englebert Humperdink. The musician." My birthday was coming up and I didn't know what to do, and I hired him on the spot. The afternoon of my birthday I got really nervous that he was gonna say something transphobic or super sexist, but instead he was just really needy. Any time I'd try and talk to anyone while he was performing he would start bugging me and yelling my name from the stage, but luckily I love attention, so it was alright.

A few months later, I took my friend, Daniel, to this pretty great diner in Maspeth. He was losing his shit about how great it looked and when we walked in, Daniel was like, in hushed tones, "OMG. Check out that Elvis impersonator!" Right then, the Elvis turned around and he was *my* Elvis. He was like, "Hey Colin! How you been? How's your father?" I basically seemed like the coolest guy on Earth.

3) Troy Ave – "Doo Doo." Troy Ave is this rap dude from Crown Heights, who Funk Flex was hyping crazy all year on Hot 97, but who never really busted through to the mainstream. He probably has whack politics and definitely works really hard to affirm busted notions of what masculinity should look like, so it's not necessarily the worst thing in the world that he never got popular. But, this song is a super catchy, feel good anthem with no real politics beyond rising above the haters, which I think everyone can get behind. Plus the hook says, "To the people who thought I was gonna flop / Y'all a part of the reason I ain't gonna stop / Against the odds I went hard until I plopped…" And plop was my official word of 2015, so that's obviously very important to me.

4) Sheer Mag – *II* EP. The first Sheer Mag 7" was so perfect that I was like, "There's no way the next one will be as good," and then it was! I wasn't gonna bother including this because probably everybody will, but then this thing happened that I gotta tell you about.

Last week, I was making a pie with my mom and it was kind of a tender time because her baby boy moved away and now I'm back. It's very emotional. Anyway, I was chopping up apples or something, and she asked me to put on music and so I put on this record. As those first drum hits on "Fan The Flames" rang out in the kitchen, I started crying, thinking about how good the riff is and that I was about to share that awesome riff with the woman who gave birth to me. FYI, My mom 100% did not seem to care or be moved at all by the song.

5) Popper Burns – CS. Okay! Gonna keep this one brief, but I really can't understand why this band isn't huge. Totally the best weirdo rockers I've seen in ages and their record is *soooo gooooood*. Manic freaked out queers doing punk about gender anxiety, patriarchal damage, surveillance paranoia, war, fucking, etc. Frontwoman, Patti Melt, is one of the most intense performers I've seen in a long time and the rest of the band creates a dissonant, dystopian musical landscape for Patti's ranting. Def go look them up and listen to their record if you like fucked up punk by fucked up freaks.

6) Book came out. My book came out. I threw myself a giant release party at Silent Barn where I read to 200+ people, including a bunch of my extended family and friends dating back to childhood. Then In School and Downtown Boys played. I really felt like part of a community and like there was a sense of continuity to my life. I had been going through a bunch of stuff while I was writing the book and had isolated myself intensely from the people who care about me. During the nine months between when I handed the book in and it came out, I spent a lot of time rekindling friendships I had let slip, as well as making new friends. It felt really good to care and be cared about. I had been hanging out with this truly sweet babe from my past and she didn't live in New York. The morning of my book release, she surprised me by showing up unexpected on my stoop. There were a whole bunch of reasons that she wasn't gonna be able to get to town for it, but then she showed up anyway it was one of the nicest things anyone has done for me ever in my life.

7) Left New York. Then I moved to Texas to live with her! Well, not exactly that fast, but almost that fast. I've talked about it a lot in previous columns, but I just wanna say again how glad I am to have finally moved away from the place I grew up and how exciting it is to be thinking about a new life outside there. Moving across the country to live with an excellent babe rules too. She's the first person I've ever dated who is as nice to me as I am to her, which is a real good change and I highly recommend it. Date someone who is nice to you! You deserve it!

8) Met Eileen Myles. This isn't really that big maybe, but I met Eileen Myles and I think that's rad because she's the greatest. I had a dream right before we went to go see Eileen read that I was in this kind of zombie apocalypse scenario where everything was scary and frantic, and I ran into Bruce Springsteen in a sporting goods store where we were both stealing guns to fight zombies. I asked him to sign a baseball for my girlfriend, "in case we all make it through this."

Well, because of that dream and also because of this rumor I heard about Jimmy Shotwell getting a baseball signed by Noam Chomsky, I decided I would get Eileen Myles to sign a baseball and then I forgot to bring a baseball!!!! As if *I* own a baseball. OMG. I had brought a copy of my book to give her and she was like, "Well, I'm going to Europe and I don't have room in my stuff, is it tacky if I ask you to mail it to me?" I was like, "Of course not." Then I had her sign a copy of my own book, which I think is very funny.

She was obviously super tough, but seemed very nice and it's not like we're friends or anything, but there's definitely something cool about meeting her. I've stared at the cover of *Cool For You* for a really long time thinking about how rad she is. I think a large portion of the way I perform masculinity is based heavily on the photo on the cover of that book. Not that I spread my legs that wide when I sit, but more in terms of ~ViBeZ~. Maybe one day we'll be friends and I'll tell her that in person, but at least for now I've got a copy of my book that she signed.

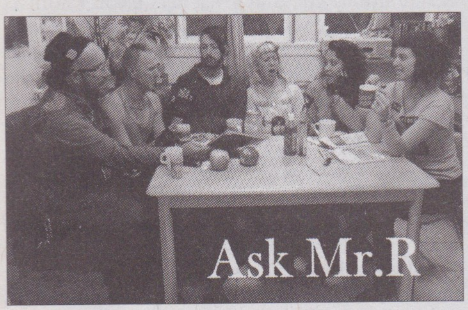
9) Returned home to visit after having moved away. Touched on this for a sec in the Sheer Magazine section of the column, but I can't stress enough how cool it was for me to return home. Having never moved away before, I've never felt the glorious enveloping warmth of return. For me, it was returning to the place I grew up and my birth family. I understand that I am one of the lucky ones and those places are fraught for many people. That said, living in a place where I felt comfortable, safe and cared for by many, was pretty rad, but going back there to visit really takes the cake! I felt like a celebrity!

10) Suspicious Beasts – *Might Die Tomorrow* LP. Suspicious Beasts's main songwriter, Yusuke Okada, is one of my favorite people and he drew my column header; you know, I'm biased. Listen, I love this record so much. I've been listening to demos of these songs that Yusuke emailed me for a while, so hearing them fleshed out and properly mixed is super cool. Yusuke is one of the best and most prolific songwriters I know and his records have a timeless feeling to them that is hard to pin down. I asked Becca what she thought it sounded like last night, and she said, "Guitar-based pop music. There's a lead that sounds like the Byrds, but its pop, not country." The last time they toured in America I saw them twice and learned that they are, by far, the loudest band out of anyone I know! This record came out on the very unfortunately named label, Alien Snatch, which is in Germany. You can buy it from them or maybe from elsewhere too? I don't even know. Ask your local record store to order it if people even still do that anymore.

I would also like to mention that Yusuke is in two other bands which both rule. One is called Lost Balloons, and it's his project with Jeff Burke from Marked Men. They have a record on Alien Snatch too. It's louder, more punk, and has a toned-down Marked Men feel, which works very well with Yusuke's style of self-loathing via song. Then, he has another outfit called Friend where he shares songwriting duties with Nate Stark formerly of Bent Outta Shape (and many other bands). The band is rounded out by Chuck Van Dyke (from Stupid Party and a bunch of

Chattanooga bands) and Matt Callahan (from Bent, Young Men, etc) on bass and drums respectively. Listen up, they're really good. They don't have a record out so just go see them or something.

None of these are punk bands, per se, but they are weirdo rock by punks that fits well within *Maximum Rocknroll*'s purview. Like, Billy Childish. I dunno, just listen to this shit, okay?



I don't think anyone should take advice, but there are probably a lot of things for the punks to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it more as an "opinion" column, though. (...and if we need a tagline for that I hope it can be something as vague as: "A column for people who are intrigued by subtle differences between the 'punks' and the 'punx.'")

Text a question to 510-585-HELP (510-585-4357)! Maybe one day I'll win that free voicemail message from Wait Wait Don't Tell Me *and actually encourage phone questions, but until then you should probably just send texts or send a regular assed email to: askmrr@mail.com. If you are sending a question that is time sensitive, let me know so that I can get you a timely response!*

Dear Mr. R,

Whyever do "well meaning" punks try to tell me I have to vote? If they trust me with a vote, why don't they trust me with enough brain cells to decide not to? And if they think it's about apathy (which it definitely is not), then why do they think telling me to vote is going to improve my not shit givingness? If anything, punks should understand that when you tell me what to do, I'm definitely going to do the opposite.

—Against All Authority Actually

It's pretty easy for people to think of non-voting punks as unengaged and apathetic because 1) that's the way punks have been portrayed in everything forever, and 2) punks always think they're right. Just kidding, but you should feel pretty good that people don't assume punks will just do the opposite of what people tell them to do. Punks usually have a lot of nuanced arguments and ideas backing up the things they believe that didn't get there just because someone suggested the opposite was correct.

Generally, when people don't understand why you don't want to do something that they see as very important, or when they think you just aren't paying attention to the issue at hand, they will bother you over and over again until they either finally understand your point of view, or they manage to change your mind. Being assured that you're not apathetic doesn't really give a person a lot to go on, so I asked some other non-voting punks what the actual reasons were behind their personal decisions not to vote, and why they might still do it sometimes anyway. Most of the responses I received via social media and real life were variations of not wanting to participate in/strengthen a system they do not believe should exist. When paired with the fact that not a lot of people feel as though their votes are being counted on a national level anyway, going through the presidential voting charade feels pointless. (This doesn't seem to be as much of a problem if you're living in a swing state.) Everyone still wants what's best for their communities though obviously, and some who would never vote otherwise seem to feel more comfortable/counted voting locally for propositions and things that can be perceived as affecting them more directly, but, of course, that leaves them out of the federal decision to fund their local Planned Parenthood, etc. Some people choose not to vote because they feel they don't know enough about the issues, and don't want to just show up and make a guess. John No, editor of the *Teaching Resistance* column here in *MRR*, wrote a really insightful response which I think touches on a lot of the gray areas we deal with when deciding whether to cast a vote:

"I think the system is totally broken, that majoritarian democracy as a concept is pretty f'd up and oppressive, and that there are a billion structures (tiny and huge) in place to make sure most voting does next to nothing if it does not serve the interests of capitalism. I always remember this as I go into the voting booth, hold my nose, and vote for things and candidates (especially local/state things) that are minimally repellent to me, while generally abstaining from the choices that truly will make no difference and just keep things terrible (i.e. I refuse to vote for a 'Democrat' for president). One can also vote without fooling oneself into thinking that it is any sort of real solution, or should be done in place of real work towards real solutions.

"I'm also a social studies teacher in public schools for both adult learners (who "want" to be there) and teenagers (who are generally coerced to be there) and working in those schools could also be seen as participating in an oppressive system—similarly to any of us who hold jobs doing some kind of social welfare/service work that have any connection to or funding from government and/or capital (yes, that includes "charitable" foundation contributions from wealthy plutocrats). As I live in the world and want to make a difference where I can, I just try to subvert that system as much as I can while I am there, too.

"Yes, voting is type of a validation of a system that is totally f'd. It is also just one of many tools that are available to those of us who are invested in genuine change, albeit this particular tool is half broken and liable to backfire and hit us in the nose. But sometimes you just gotta use that kind of tool because it is what you need for a particular job. The thing I try to remember is that voting takes minimal effort for myself as an enfranchised, privileged white male, so I just go ahead to try to use this elite (broken) tool to promote the least fucked up policies and candidates possible if available, then I go back to the more time-consuming work of being a teacher/activist, listening to people who are disenfranchised and trying to elevate their ideas, and pushing for much more concrete change and an end to capitalism overall.

"We live in this system and this world, and unless you are a party-line political fundamentalist there are no rules saying you can't both vote and spend the rest of your time trying to smash capitalism. Under ineffective, milquetoast-oppressive 'liberal' governance, true radicalism has way more chances to build up steam and include more voices, which is way better for any ultimate revolutionary goalpost (unless you are a vanguardist who just wants to stage a coup and take over yourself—'here's the new boss, same as the old boss'). You can see examples of this in the U.S. from the last 20 years. Under the quietly-oppressive neoliberalism of Clinton and Obama, there have been way more interesting things being hatched by radicals which actually catch on, with mass movements like BLM, Occupy, and the Antiglobalization movement all bringing up powerful alternatives to a system which seems to offer no alternatives through electoral politics. Under mediocre 'liberal' regimes which are elected under false ideological pretenses, the failure of our system to offer a decent alternative becomes crystal clear to way more people, who are then fired up to push things much further.

"We all know the old line about how if we just don't vote, and a hyper-oppressive government is elected, then we will finally have the kindling point and critical mass possible for a revolution. Problem is that this scenario has happened dozens of times in recent history, including in the U.S., and it inevitably results in accelerated degeneration into oligarchy at best and outright fascism at worst—and in the latter, many of us would end up at the wrong end of a gun barrel, because like it or not people who don't think like us (including the cops and paramilitary right-wing) have way more guns than we do and do not like the way we think. Meantime, the vast bulk of people just fearfully wish for a return to some kind of comfortable stability, which just makes them more and more closed-minded and conservative, and more likely to long for comfortable milquetoast 'liberal' governance in response to the outright oppression of the far right-wing.

"None of this smells very good, and politics is gross. But the big picture does count, and every time I want to totally reject electoral politics as ever being effective for anything I have to think of my aunt Patsy Mink, the first woman of color elected to congress (she was Japanese). Patsy happens to have written and politicked into passage Title IX, which attached federal funding to a civil rights guarantee that schools must provide equal access to programs for women. Without that law, I may never have heard many of the voices/ideas of my radical feminist friends and family who have so many genius ideas/voices that I hope to use my privileged white male status to help elevate. And let's be honest, here: Title IX was a half-measure intended to supplement the Equal Rights Amendment (which Patsy was very strongly pushing), which never passed because patriarchy. At least *something* positive

happened, but to look at something marginally positive gained through democracy and stop pushing hard for more radical change would be the worst mistake we could make. So yeah, I'll vote, but it is just a footnote to bigger and better things."

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Many times I realize that I actually have no idea about the things that seemed so obvious to me just seconds before. I do believe that everything is simple and obvious and the real science is only finding the structure among these obvious, simple things. If you can trace the connecting joints, then everything will be obvious. When I was an intern for a newspaper it seemed like time and nothing else is between the readers and the writers. Readers needed everything obvious gathered together; writers scavenged it for them in their working hours. Now that I work among real people I see how often people think they know the obvious when they don't. Most people are not even interested in finding anything out about anything. Rather, they want their views and thoughts mirrored back to them, to feel solace in this approval. People structure their whole life on piles of imaginary layers, developing a very unstable system of true uncertainty that is strengthened by the defending power of some of the worst human characteristics. In punk's nomenclature there are also many notions that seem obvious but are mostly misunderstood, misinterpreted, misused or bare idiocy. Still they are preserved with resolute defense.

I spent some sentences in previous columns in search of the true meaning of the so-called message and its failed representation. I also don't think there is anything that is more than kindness and solidarity that unity could provide and DIY is basically common sense, the brave strategy to go out and do your things.

A few days ago I wanted to write something in Hungarian on the anarchy in Flux of Pink Indians music. Then I disappointingly realized I have zero knowledge on what anarchism is (I also don't have any real clue what democracy, monarchism, etc are). The other thing that turned out is that bad anarchist bands had no idea they were bands or anarchist bands and thus they destroyed the message in punk music and created pop punk while all along they were so sure in their self-proclaimed status.

With the luxury of being able to not understand English without my focused will, for me many anarcho bands are music first and message second. Although I have to imprecisely quote Layla Gibbon here, that listening to Conflict really does sound like waking up in the seventh hour of a socialist workers union meeting and not like a punk band. Because all I hear is chanting of what's right / what's wrong lyrics and nothing else interesting is coming from the instruments. For me, Flux of Pink Indians and some other releases on Crass Records sound like liberated chaos. It is a won victory. Their music puts the question into my head: how can something this terrible sound this great? Rather than: how can such a terrible band think what they do is good? I love the Mob and like the Zounds too, because their music shows that even in chaos on your own terms you can create melodies and great music without sacrificing your message. Terrible music with over the top didactic lectures about how the future will be will always lose against bands who are already bringing us the future.

These terrible bands preach about anarchy but they do not practice it. They theorize and mystify anarchism. Making it out of reach allows them to preach without practice. Their music statically remains a tool since they use it as an art board for their message while their music should be the subjective of the experiment. Anarchy should be the tool. This missed opportunity is based on misunderstanding their power, platform and duty, leading them to complete failure as they over-estimate their duty which leads them to abuse their power to fuck up their platform. This results in anarchist musicians who can't even turn their music anarchistic, maybe because they can't or don't want to. Music is what they do and they are still unable to liberate it. The question is then: why do they even use music? Art is supposed to be a form of self-expression (that's what people use it to expand themselves) unlike ideologies, which should be chosen by people (not the other way around, when people are adjusted to fit ideologies). Even disciplined, boring people can be anarchists but if music is someone's channel to present their world view and this person's view is to function without orders then how come they can't demonstrate that in their own self-expression? What they demonstrate is that their self expression is subordinate to an idea and this hierarchy assigns responsibility on its participants. In a dictatorship people mostly just own responsibilities while only dictators own rights; in a democracy responsibilities are the quid pro quo of the rights; in anarchy since there is no established system that orders people's activities, they have to live without rights and without responsibilities.

Thus for me to say that one has to make music because it's an easier form for the public to digest the message, is a complete failure since it makes the activity—playing music—secondary and prioritizes the responsibility beyond the act. In anarchy there is no responsibility and in music the message is sonic not verbal.

So if a group of people could make music in which only the message is important then others could play music in which the message is the least important. And if a punk band could play lame rock'n'roll in order to advertise their punk ideas then lame rockers could say they are punks in their free time except when they play punk music. This is a separation of what we do and what we think. It also distances what we do and what we think we do and what we think and what we think we think. This brings us to artists whose politics and art are actually divided when they think they are in correlation. Because it's not enough to create anything and then explain your message in the side note, in interviews, anywhere that does not belong to the platform of your art; that is terrible art. In better situations, that's science. Expressionists believed that their paintings could change the world and help the needed. Anarcho bands thought that their message would save the world. But their main priority was not playing music but transmitting pamphlets. Was it because they were not talented or creative enough? Or because they thought music is just fun? I have no idea. As I see it music is war, a weapon. I was in tiresome arguments with people who thought booking shows is equal with throwing parties. For many it is but there are also dozens who only see aesthetics in ideologies. The liberating force of the punk infrastructure is that everyone could do whatever they want and if they give whatever they have the result will be mostly stunning. If someone does not see this and does not get the laughs while missing the war cries then I don't wanna be part of their future, because that is only ideologies while my present is already in function.

I have no clue what is happening on the first two Flux of Pink Indians records but they are beautiful, scary, mind-blowing, perfect punk records. The guitars have the sharp bites that attack your mind, the overdoseage of ideas feels like a chain of explosions in a cultural terrorist attack. Every idea expands the space of the music but these newfound territories are instantly filled with the ideas and everything that stuck to them (they are more than they seem). Their congested music descends all its interestingly dangerous and artistically subversive ideas. Naive ideas turning out perfectly in practice with preserving amateurism but assuming genius and succeeding with keeping together the chaos as they paste their music onto a distorted background. This vertiginous cavalcade of many things happening in parallel. Such things would stand out even on their own. As the focus is constantly changing in circulation, the foregrounds become the background, different voices are introduced, melodies are dueling with pure noise and beautifully shrill singing, samples of speeches and spoken word free-form poems are put on each other, against each other, after each other. Tempos change, nothing is static but the possibility of whatever. It's brave and full of life like a painting that is similar to the one on the cover of *The Fucking Cunts Treat Us Like Pricks*. Every brushstroke would be an idea here. I have learnt in interviews that they were not very interested in their own scene and neither were they into music that much; for them it was an adventure and they have succeeded.

Speaking about interviews, I read a very great one with This Heat in which they have revealed that their music was to resonate with radical ideas just as jazz was in a different time in a different space. I adore it when a band can make themselves more interesting outside of their music while they were exciting even

before the additional information. These have to be in relation to support each other. They should make me want to learn about them and it's great when the new knowledge helps me appreciate the already known music even more. I also like it when I don't have to read about music. No one talks about the power of lyrics in the works of Sex Pistols and Ramones because it was the riffs that changed the world; they put themselves into them. People who could decode their message not just ended up with similar sound but the idea that it is possible to do whatever they want. The Clash was struggling to get their message out and they got laughed at out loud.
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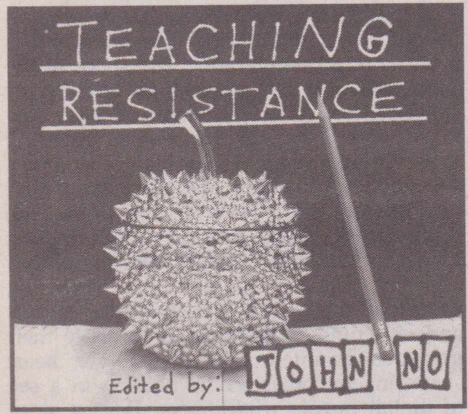


This month's Teaching Resistance is by James Lockridge from Burlington, Vermont. For over 20 years James has directed Big Heavy World, a volunteer-staffed youth organization that advocates for equity and inclusion in the arts and society by teaching useful skills (technical and otherwise) to teens and other young musicians/artists in Vermont. In this column, he talks about what people who are party to some institutional power can do to promote a better world by helping lift the voices of people who should have a chance to subvert the system.

The Elevation Of Agitation

With the small effort of turning our head from the practical world ahead of us toward the roots of empathy and back again, we practice humanity; we practice aspiring to thrive.

I'm proud as a human when I discover other people acting like they want their species to thrive. I see this most often at hardcore punk rock shows at our teen center or in basements, where young people come together to share their art and speak to one another as messengers for a higher social order, where respect for one another is not just a code among themselves, but a universal and inclusive rule. There is an imperative to not just talk about a better world, but to accomplish it.

Willingness to share a vision for a better society, and a better world, emerges from having a sense of justice and faith that justice is attainable, and having the confidence to be an ambassador of this vision. But we aren't born into having confidence. And as we grow we learn that human frailties find expression even in the fabric of the world.

Through our lives we all find comfort in the voice inside that, when it's speaking, is reminding us of who we are. We make choices and commitments to our paths. Our actions have tone and timbre. Who we are and what we do contributes to something symphonic and much bigger than our selves.

There is significance when our personal choices start to give pattern to the weave of the world, and significance again when our time together ends and we contribute the combined wisdom of our lives to a cycle that renews with each generation. Our choices become our legacy.

The decisions we make depend on how comfortable we are in making them. When we see the consequences of our choices clearly before we choose, when we see the future that our choices will bring us in the real world, our choices are easy. We avoid pain and we strive for more comfort when we watch the path ahead. We navigate in this direction with the muscle memory of self-preservation.

But we can see in the other direction, too. We can look backward, to the origin of our humanity, to where we are first shaped. In that direction, we find our neglected inspirations, the values that are fundamental and give us clarity. We value trust, and fairness, and compassion, and aspiration. These values would not exist without other people for our choices and actions to reflect from. With the small effort of turning our head from the practical world ahead of us, toward the roots of empathy and back again, we practice humanity; we practice aspiring to thrive.

As we each earn or by chance find ourselves in positions of authority, empowered by our civic framework, by our economy and our governance—as we are enabled to elevate or punish others, as we create the laws that touch every life; as we define the strategies of who will be served and who will be marginalized in our society—we choose that the moral handrails of trust and fairness be reached for.

Yet, I find leaders who asked to be leaders, but in their silence or evasion choose to not lead. I find leaders who pantomime campaigns of public engagement, choosing to not include. I find leaders who walk their paths without looking back to remind themselves that their decisions should foster fairness in our society. They choose other priorities. I find leaders who anathematize their critics and shrink from the conversations that would make their work fair and transparent and inclusive. They choose to not aspire.

What surprises me most, is that the brightest torchlight illuminating our future is held by the youngest among us. The young musicians who take their anger, the injustices, and physical violence of the world, and re-forge it into music and words, and share it with others as a transformative message, one that's imbued with compassion and the confidence to construct a stronger community, a society of peers who because of this example of reflection and passion and inclusion, choose also to be ambassadors for justice.

The path of least resistance is a path of least-difficult choices. We are surrounded by values we don't habitually reflect on. Our individual choices affect us all. And we recognize that it takes confidence to choose to make choices that are the bright lines from our values to our actions.

I found a photo online of someone holding a sign that said, "Punk Rock 101: When someone falls, pick them up. In the pit and in life." It was posted by a teenager named Sarah, who started a Facebook page to meet friends and spread an anti-bullying and autism awareness message. Sarah experienced complications from premature birth, has autism, learning and emotional challenges, but still reaches—from values of compassion and inclusion—for a better future with a page titled, "I'm different, you're different, let's be friends."

If Sarah can draw a bright line from values to actions; if the youth of Burlington can transmute anger into a halcyon catharsis, then every single one of us has the capacity to achieve—with confidence—a society that's improved by our choices. By making values real through our actions we gain the footing to encourage principled choices by our peers. We don't need more leaders. But we do need more people who know what leadership is.

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, punk-affiliated, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. There is also an archive for this column which can be found online at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.

I don't know how to drive. In addition to this, years of having my body directed around without a word (in cars or on the sidewalk/gravel/fields in strollers, cruisers, wagons, and manual wheelchairs) led me to believe that I also don't know how to navigate. But this isn't true. Even the moments I lived or stayed in New York City didn't prepare me for learning how to get lost in San Francisco on public transportation in my power chair, and honestly, learning how to get lost was a joy. Every other time I had been lost, it was actually someone else who was lost. Because I grew up disabled, people often didn't ask me to help them navigate places or figure out where we were going. Whether they did sometimes and I refused to engage, I don't know. I absorbed at some point that I was fairly useless and silly when it came to practical or logistical affairs, and that is also less than true.

I have learned, in my adulter adulthood (this is up for debate), that there are able-bodied

and otherwise nondisabled people who really don't know how to navigate themselves out of a paper bag. I have no explanation for this, but I have learned that I am helpful, sharp, and have a killer memory. Together, the robot phones and I get our leg-walky friends un-lost. As a child, my skewed spatial awareness was psychoanalyzed and chalked up to my disability, which is interesting, but bodies are perhaps even more complicated than that. For instance, access support is something that certain disabled people need more often and in more apparent ways than less disabled or nondisabled people, but really everybody needs access support. How easily you are able to seek and to provide access for yourself is a part of how ableism functions in society. Having one's own car is often more accessible than having to schlep yourself to whatever stop or station on wheel or toe. But acquiring and maintaining a car is not very accessible or affordable for many. What about learning to drive?

In health class, my sophomore year of high school, I passed the pre-pre-driving test, and my mom started researching what it would take for me to drive a car. My ankles are not really hinged like some ankles, and the combination of that and my legs fatiguing often would make operating pedals with my feet difficult and dangerous. That and I am super short. There was a program in my bumblefuck hometown that would pay for disabled teenagers and adults to get driving lessons (with hand controls etc.) and so we tried to apply. But the program only paid for those who were not planning or able to go to college. Which is understandable maybe? But also cheap as fuck.

I had gotten several scholarships for my saucy essay wordplay and all of the things I am not in society. So luckily I got the fuck out of Clinton, where you have to drive to get anywhere but there. If you want to get in or out and you don't drive you have to use one of a couple inaccessible commuter buses or the inaccessible train station two towns over. My parents were ambitious about my access, and drove me to everything before they finally drove me up to college in Massachusetts. Friends' houses, queer youth groups in Pennsylvania, my dance company in Harlem. Everywhere. I feel soothed by riding cars.

It's only been in the past few years that sometimes that calm has turned to agitation and disease. I find myself craving my route. I crave not having a middle person. I crave a past and a future in which I never assumed that an able-bodied person knew best where and how to move my body through space. But also, I want to drive. My friend, Main, wants a car too. Or at least, a better way to get around. He had a stroke a few years ago after being shot, and now can't swiftly access one side of his body and parts of his brain relating to aspects of comprehension and articulation. He understands much more than he is able to express. Honestly, I think he was always the deepest of his friends; he gets so frustrated like he's stupid or lame with the shit he's trying to express to me. I want to say, "You're working with big concepts, Main man! Everybody struggles to articulate those." I think he's brilliant and I think we have a lot in common. He lives next door to me with his parents, whom I also adore, at a house that the whole neighborhood can count on to be right where they left it, bustling with life and decorated for every holiday and birthday. We've always hung out at his house together and read aloud or drank and listened to music while I watched him play Dominos or laughed at jokes that always seem half-drizzled, half-made by the men around him, maybe because they think I won't get them, or maybe because they're about women. Over the summer I started inviting him to go out with me places, to gauge his interest and the possibility. At first he said he would see if his parents would drive him, but then he admitted that there's no way his parents would sit at a poetry reading. I'm working on this coordination of our access and adventure. One day we're gonna go out on the town.

Due to the ableism experienced by many disabled people on public transportation, including Paratransit (which is supposed to be an equal access alternative for those who can't ride buses or BART but is more expensive than the two and runs less often), accessible cars and vans are often the best option for us. With a car, you have the most control of how and when you go, how many people your body directly interacts with, how close you can get to your destination. Since my community of disabled friends and comrades has grown in the past six years, I have witnessed multiple alternatives to driving your own car executed with fucking style. I've realized that my desire to not have a middle person is a reasonable desire, but also that such a privilege will never belong to a lot of disabled people, and it's my own fucked up, internalized ableism ideas about what is and is not matured, dignified, adult independence flaring up when I have the thought that I want to stop relying on other people one day. My friend Lateef has cerebral palsy, drives a power chair and talks with a TTS device. He's a poet, a radio host, and an important advocate for access to alternative communication methods. He programmed his TTS voice to sound like Saul Williams. He has a big black van with a lift and multiple spaces for wheelchairs. He has multiple attendants who rotate depending on time and day of the week. They drive his car for him and show him deep respect. That seems like a pretty rad option. I told Main about Lateef and his van, not totally sure how he would feel about it, since I've never seen him talk to any other disabled person but me, and I don't know how he feels about identifying that way or rolling with a disabled crew, but my instincts that it was a reasonable, badass option were correct. He looked stoked. I want forever to be a disabled person learning how other disabled people move through the world, and introducing us to each other.

I still want a car. Whether I drive it or not. Cars are terrifying and cumbersome. My love/r just survived a massive car crash the other night. At least one of the other drivers was drunk and speeding. In fact my love/r didn't just survive it, but got out with just a few bruises, lacerations, and whiplash. His car did not survive. I've been hit by an SUV before in my power chair crossing the street at night. I have seen my friend's car totaled by being impaled by another car into a tree. People drive drunk or high or fogged or anxious or scared all the time, because they don't think they have a choice, or they think it will be okay. And yet every day and night that there is a reason to go out, to the doctor's, to a gig, to get my chair serviced, to get my nails done, to go to a party, to go to a show I'm supposedly putting on, I try to swing a ride. I trust the act of getting in a car. I want to be another big metal insect slinking in the mix of all that uncertainty and smog, because then at least I'll always have somewhat of a way to get out, or in. Don't worry, I send prayers up to the Blue God, The Mistress of Traffic, and Femme Jesus every time. Every damn time. Thank you for protecting all reckless and earnest and dis/abled babies, as much as you can everywhere.

Accessibility Shoutout: Repair Revolution moved over one building to expand and is even more accessible now! The space of the show itself and the bathroom are both bigger and more navigable. The stage now has a step to get onto it but no one seemed be using it as a stage. Black Tones blew everyone's minds, they covered a few blues songs that give me mouth tingles and were, in general, a blues rocky earth shaking mouth-tingling kind of experience. Wizard Apprentice has added visuals and this beautiful frightening avatar of themselves which off-lip synchs and sometimes adds back-up vocals to their gorgeous haunted understated yet heart shattering melodies whilst floating in a sea of digital purple wildflowers. Tierney sings a lot about what it is to sing while having a ? tattooed on their throat which is just like... RIGHT??! I am ashamed to say that I went to pee right when Hot Tears was starting, which is a shame because I hecka love Hot Tears. They make me weep literal Hot Tears and remind me of lotsa of dark wave-esque experimental folk I have loved. Yet I would tell a lot of those folks to be quieter if they were playing in another room nearby while Hot Tears was playing. After I went to the bathroom, Tony told me that it was past eleven and I had to go shake my gogo thing in a sherbet colored bodysuit at Night Crush and get that money. Sorrynotsorry.

My other shoutout goes to the process of planning and putting on my birthday party: Be On Top/America's Next Top Model/Celebrate DysBeauty, an ANTM disability justice subversion themed interactive art and dance party on December 13th. I don't know if it will end up feeling as accessible as I attempted to make it, but I really appreciate everyone who got into the process of assembling an access team and greater accessibility for the moderately accessible space. Lesley at LoBot rules and it means the world to me that they took on communicating with me through multiple weeks while they were in finals, making the space accessible and affordable to me, and communicating with the other residents to ensure that the space could be as scent-free as possible week and day of. We'll see how it goes off! I'm BEAST TYRA.

Inaccessibility Shoutout: When people don't mention that something is inaccessible because they assume you already know. Lotsa places I didn't go to this month deserve a shoutout but I'm tired. I was on a road trip so simultaneous accessibility and inaccessibility shoutout to cars. After riding in one for

fourteen hours I was sore and tired for days and days.

Email me at foxlovesriver@gmail.com. And if you waste your time on twitter, which you shouldn't, check @nevebeyankin to see other things about bodies and points of access I'm writing.

NORWAY, LIBERACE AND SNOWMEN... THE LEGACY OF THE SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN

The SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN are one of the best Boston punk bands of the last twenty years. Scratch that—they're one of the best Boston punk bands of all-time, period. They were around from 1993 to 2000 and it's hard to believe it's been over fifteen years since they split up. I imagine that means many of *Maximum Rocknroll*'s younger readers (perhaps some of the old-timers as well) might not be familiar with them, even with the internet making music by just about every band readily accessible. I always think of them this time of year because they put out my favorite holiday single, "Merry Christmas, I Fucked Your Snowman," backed with "Ho-Ho-Ho Chi Minh" and I fondly remember their annual Christmas shows, where their vocalist Albert Genna (aka Ping Pong) would wrap himself in Christmas lights and they'd run through a medley of holiday tunes done punk style. I also just played a cover of their song "Police Police" by Albany band MALE PATTERNS on the all-covers *Sonic Overload*.

So what were these three guys/one gal all about? Musically, they drew from the well of snotty, tuneful '77 era punk and infused it with 1-2, 1-2 thrash speed, along with more mid-tempo anthems, almost all of it incredibly catchy. What really made them special was their wicked sense of humor, without devolving into schlocky comedy rock. They weren't your average punks, either—Albert went on to be a librarian at Harvard; bass player, Victoria Arthur, is a pediatrician; guitarist Tom Cloherty has both an MBA and MSW and has worked as a social worker and teacher; and drummer Steve "Chez Nips" Maxwell is an engineer.

The band's name came from a segment on *The Price Is Right* game show and they even had a song about the show's host called "Bob Barker Is Innocent" (after Barker was sued for sexual harassment). They wrote songs about columnist Marilyn Vos Savant, dubbed "the world's smartest person," insufferable newspaper columnist/TV bloviator Mike Barnicle ("he's just a barnacle on my ass") and the entertainer Liberace. They wrote a tribute to nineteenth century president Millard Fillmore ("Last Of The Whigs") and took gratuitous shots at Norway ("Fuck You, Norway") and LA ("213"). Instead of writing a standard-issue anti-cop diatribe, they came up with the aforementioned "Police Police," where they lamented how police just weren't all that friendly anymore. It was a musical and cultural sponge effect. They covered everything from French pop music to '77 punk chestnuts, even doing a tribute picture disc of songs by '90s UK girl punk duo SHAMPOO. There was also the karaoke record done with BLANKS 77, but that's best-forgotten. Trust me. Their live shows were always a blast and it was kind of striking how these four decidedly non fashion-oriented people were like punk rock pied-pipers to a throng of spiked-'n-studded fans, although their appeal expanded beyond that audience. One of the best shows I saw that decade was one they played with their pals NEW BOMB TURKS at the Middle East club.

I interviewed them in 1996 in Tom and Victoria's apartment. Their living room overflowed with records, CDs, and posters of Captain America and Malcolm Jamal-Warner and they showed me a video that had *South Park*'s "Spirit of Christmas" (a good year before the TV series), a Japanese spaghetti ad with Alyssa Milano and a drunk Serge Gainsbourg making lewd comments to Whitney Houston. They were voracious record collectors. Albert even said, "a sure sign of a bad band is when you talk to the members and none of them are record collectors. I think that's a warning light of trouble."

Regarding "Fuck You, Norway," I wondered if it was some kind of critique about the worship of Norse culture, Odin and all that, by certain people. Before the interview, I talked to Ron Lacer, from the old Boston label Fan Attic, and he said they probably just figured it was far enough away to make fun of without having to worry about any repercussions. The band said the song, indeed, wasn't anything that deep—Albert said they just wanted to have a "soccer violence" song and that the idea actually came from when UK soccer player Paul "Gazza" Gascoigne had said "Fuck Off, Norway," before England played them. And it's a song that's been misunderstood—I found this out when posting a video of it on YouTube and a lot of Norwegians thought SHOWCASE were serious and accused them of being racists. I mean, how can anyone take a song that says the Vikings were gay seriously? Or tells them to take their fish eggs and just go away. In any case, it's a song for the ages, one you will *never* be able to get out of your head once you hear it. "Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you, fuck you" ad infinitum. By the way, Albert admitted, "everything we say we don't like we secretly wish we were. Everything. Norwegian. We wish we were the smartest woman in the world." Tom added, "We wish we hadn't fucked that snowman."

I recall the band's demise being rather abrupt and, considering that I've been told Albert doesn't even like to talk about his time in the band, a reunion seems highly unlikely, which is a shame because there's still a place for clever, sometimes puerile humor (though nothing low-rent) and I think we still need that. Few bands did it as well as they did. You can hear echoes of their sound in the Cambridge band WHITE PAGES (who have covered a Showcase song or two) and SOCIAL CIRCKLE did "Police Police" on one of their 7"s—in fact, that band's vocalist Christian fronted a SHOWCASE cover band at a 2005 Halloween show.

Tom, Victoria and Steve were in SPITZZ after SHOWCASE broke up (Steve left early on) and they released a 7" and a couple of albums, in more of a rock 'n roll vein. The 7" was OK but none of them are really worth going out of your way for.

Most of SHOWCASE's records probably aren't that tough to find and, except for their earliest releases, and are relatively cheap. They had two full lengths, *Appetite of Kings* (Elevator Music, 1996) and *Permanent Stains* (Damaged Goods, 1999), in addition to a bunch of 7"s and splits—my favorite is still *All The President's Heads* (Pogostick, 1994) which has, of course, "Fuck You, Norway." They redid it for the second album but the original is better. If you've never heard SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN, your life will be all that much better if you do check them out. If not, then fuck you, fuck you, fuck you, fuck you...

AS JOHN BRANNON WOULD SAY ON TWITTER, CHECK IT OUT...

Starting this review segment off with a couple of records from Philadelphia, both co-released by the World Gone Mad label. HALDOL's latest 12" is a five-song, self-titled effort and, apparently, the first with a revamped lineup after guitarist/vocalist Geoff Smith moved from Nashville to Philly and it blows away everything I've heard from them so far. There were some hardcore elements in earlier recordings but those are gone as a dark'n'gothy/post-punk sound is the main focus. Sound gloomy? Not really. It's certainly not chipper-sounding but there's a driving edginess to their compositions. The songs are powerful, driven by thick, fluid bass-lines and nightmarish guitar, coming across like a combination of KILLING JOKE and PART 1. This is done at a fairly healthy pace, except for the intro to the languid "Beyond The Pleasure Principle," which introduces early BANSHEES guitar tones. Definitely taking it to the next level on this one.

LATEX'S second 7" *Losing Game*, is a three-song punk thumper with high-pitched, piercing, pissed-off female vocals and a blunt'n'buzzing musical attack with a whiff of UK82 in the mix. Critiques of lying politicians, lying media and people who just talk too fucking much, delivered in full rant mode. (worldgonemad.bigcartel.com)

Oakland band TØRSÖ were a pleasant surprise when I saw them play at the Boiler Room in Boston last year. I'm finally getting around to reviewing their album *Sono Pronta A Morire* (*I'm Ready To Die*) and it's a blazer. Driving D-beat hardcore that, yes, doesn't leave a lot of room for originality and is a formulaic approach but they get it down perfectly. In-the-pocket drumming, shit-hot guitar riffs underpinned with big bass lines and Ethan's scalding vocals. The cover has a woman being burned at a stake in the shape of an X and they're a self-described vegan straightedge hardcore band, although the lyrics don't really touch on that very much. Band members have also played in HOLY, PUNCH, NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS, NEO-CONS and RITUAL CONTROL. (Agipunk, agipunk.com and Sorry State, sorrystaterecords.com)

Cleveland band SPLAT play stripped-down, fuzzy-sounding no-nonsense hardcore punk on their self-titled, eight-song 7" Not an angry-sounding bunch—they don't sound like they take themselves all that seriously and there's a semi-goofy appeal here. Songs like "Negmo," "Shitspew/Breakfast" and "Blankness" remind me a bit of '90s-era band DEAD FUCKING LAST. Keep it simple, stupid. (Saucepan, 11211 Detroit Ave., Cleveland, OH 44102, saucepanrecords.bandcamp.com)

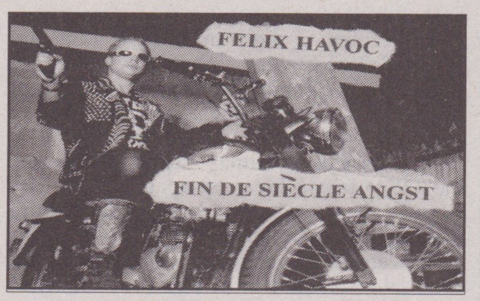
I mentioned MALE PATTERNS' cover of SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN's "Police Police" earlier in this column and that's on their new split 7" with SCUZZ on Loud Punk. That song's actually a bit of a change-up from their buzzsaw hardcore blitz but they make it their own. They've got a bug up their ass about people glued to their phones or spending way too much money of punk gear. The other songs have a POISON IDEA feel, right down to the Jerry A-sounding vocals. And if you missed my review of their *Thinking Too Much* EP a few issues back, that's also worth checking out. As for SCUZZ, their three songs are a non-stop blitzkrieg of hardcore fury with slightly-distorted, angry-as-fuck vocals.

Also from Loud Punk comes a posthumous release by Massachusetts band the EPIDEMIC, the three-song *Losing Control* EP. Featuring Matt Frado on guitar (who, sadly, passed away in 2008), they played UK82 style hardcore infused with plenty of speed. This was apparently supposed to come out years back on the label—they were recorded in 2006 and 2008--but got shelved until recently and then remixed. "Sanctified Youth," in particular, is a total ripper. Members are now in CINDERBLOCK, WHO KILLED SPIKEY JACKET? and SADIST, to name a few. They've also released a new two-song 7" by Ottawa band ZEX, a band that includes Jo from GERM ATTAK. Playing up the more tuneful side of the UK82 equation, their sound is more along the lines of VICE SQUAD. "Fear No Man" is the stronger of the two, with a good amount of energy and catchiness. "I Didn't Know" takes a poppier turn. To be honest, I've haven't been blown away by anything I've heard from this band so far but "Fear No Man" comes close. (Loud Punk, PO Box 6115, Albany, NY 12203, loudpunk.blogspot.com)

The first release on Gremlin Pogo Records is a split flexi with NEUTRON RATS and ROTTEN UK, both tearing through early '80s UK songs—the RATS pummel the MAU-MAUs "Society's Rejects" to a bloody pulp. ROTTEN UK, who are from upstate New York and not the UK, feature former BLUDWULF vocalist James. They tackle the slightly more tuneful "Sanctuary" by the UNDEAD. As the letter that accompanied the flexi says, UK82 in 2015 (or now 2016). Why not? (gremlinpogorecords@gmail.com; Loud Punk has this one, too)

Finally, from the western part of Massachusetts comes LONGINGS' debut vinyl, a self-titled 12". A three-piece with bassist Meghan Minior (FOREIGN OBJECTS, AMPERE, VACCINE and others) and guitarist Will Killingsworth (tons of bands including ORCHID, FAILURES, AMPERE and VACCINE and owner of Dead Air Studios) sharing vocals, this is a potent debut. Goth/post-punk/punk with an abundance of power and presence punctuating their melody-laden compositions. The lyrics ask a lot of questions about working ones way through life. "Tarnished" wonders "What's it take to feel significant if even just to myself" and "Trapped" laments that goals seem out of reach. But it's not a depressing-sounding album. As with many styles/genres that can get quickly oversaturated and stale, this sound is perhaps heading down that path but LONGINGS transcend that—there's a real sense of passion and barely-beneath-the-surface fury to be found on this record. (Framework, 4 Elm St., #1, Ipswich, MA 01938, frameworklabel.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com; subvox.blogspot.com, sonicoverload.net



Last month we took a look at the Death label, one of the main labels associated with the Crossover era. The other main label associated with promoting this style as a distinct genre would be Combat Core. Combat Core was a sub-label of the metal label, Combat, part of the Relativity/Sony empire. I seem to recall that the connections to Sony were mainly in the form of distribution and the label was pretty independent. At least, this is what was argued by the label heads in the letters sections of *MRR* and *Flipside.* I know a lot of people like myself really enjoyed some of the output of this label musically, but were a bit put off by the major label connections.

Combat Core started releasing records in 1985 and stopped in 1987, but it managed to release some of the very top tier crossover records in that time period. One of their first releases was the CIRCLE JERKS' *Wonderful* LP. This record has never made any impression on me. At the time, I remember people saying this was the CIRCLE JERKS' attempt to get on the metal/crossover bandwagon. But really there isn't much metal on this record—it's more like a very polished and produced slowed down version of the original CIRCLE JERKS punk sound. That "American Heavy Metal Weekend" song was funny the first one or two times I heard it, but this record is pretty forgettable. However, in 1986 Combat Core just about cornered the market on crossover that wasn't already signed to the Death Records roster and released or licensed some incredible masterpieces of the genre, including CRUMBSUCKERS' *Life of Dreams,* which I wrote about a few months back. Possibly the best crossover album, and for sure, in the top five.

LUDICHRIST was pretty raging, and usually mentioned in the same breath as the CRUMBSUCKERS. However, I feel like they have not aged well at all. This band was very talented—perhaps a bit too talented. Beneath the speed and power was a Guitar Center dude waiting to come to the surface. That is to say, this band walked the fine line between hardcore punk and MR. BUNGLE/PRIMUS style goofy rock, that only dudes who play video games and work at Guitar Center could back. While some of the songs on the *Immaculate Deception* LP are legitimately ferocious, the goofy lyrics and jazzy/funky breakdowns kill them dead. This band really shines on the one-minute-six-second track "Mengele," which is a total scorcher. I remember at the time a lot of people condemned SLAYER for glorifying Nazi atrocities with the song "Angel of Death," while LUDICHRIST openly condemned Nazi butchery. This seems like a no-brainer to us today, but back then, the Nazi skinhead scene was large and powerful, and very few bands who wanted to stay popular came out against racism or fascism, but artfully danced around the issue. Which brings me to...

AGNOSTIC FRONT. Combat Core reissued *Victim in Pain* after the original Ratcage press sold out. At the time, with the Nazi skinhead movement on the rise and skinheads instantly associated with fascism, the original cover art of a Nazi shooting a Jew in the head execution style was controversial to say the least. You, the reader, can judge whether this was just an attempt to use "brutal" imagery, to stir up controversy, or a morally ambiguous choice leaving the listener asking many questions and getting no answers. Regardless, *Victim in Pain* is a very sick LP, although the impact of this band and its fan base was pretty devastating on the Æ80s hardcore scene (and more so than a lot of people seem to remember). AGNOSTIC FRONT followed this one up with *Cause For Alarm,* which was their attempt to get in on the crossover explosion. I guess some of the songs on this LP are OK, but it all sounds pretty forced to me. The songs where they shun metal for hardcore come off the best. The Sean Taggart cover art is probably the best part.

Combat Core released some of the best English crossover bands in US editions and some of those are in the very top tier of the Crossover era, such as BROKEN BONES' *Bonecrusher* LP. For me, this is another top five crossover LP. While some of this material was initially released as a 12" in the UK, most of us heard the US pressing first. Of all the bands to start in the punk scene and add metal to their sound BROKEN BONES was one of the most successful. This LP captured them at their peak with tons of the energy and aggression of hardcore punk, but with the skills of metal, without being too over the top. Indeed, some of the songs here are a bit more towards hardcore, like they were earlier songs that didn't get so much metal treatment. A top shelf LP, I have a tattoo of some of the cover artwork.

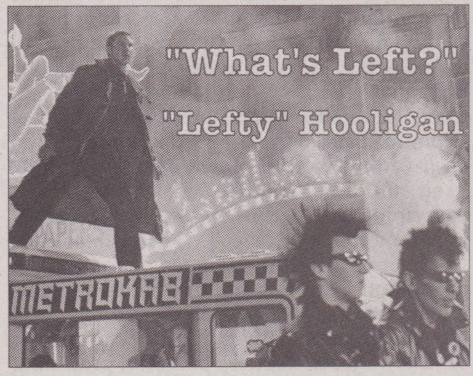
BROKEN BONES' *F.O.A.D.* is a close follow-up to BONECRUSHER, but with much more insane metal guitar work, tons more blazing leads and more metal sounding vocals. Also, I feel like the lyrical content got dumbed down a bit between the two LPs. This one is a longtime favorite of mine as well. I feel like *Bonecrusher* was more of a "serious" hardcore record with some metal influence and this is more like a total party metal record with some hardcore influence.

It's just my opinion, but the very best record to mix metal and punk is... ENGLISH DOGS' *To the Ends of the Earth* 12". This is not really a thrash record, it's more like metallic punk, but it's so fucking good. My hair still stands on end when this one is on the turntable; every song is so incredibly over the top and powerful with wailing guitars and outrageous Dungeons and Dragons lyrics. It's like these guys were punks who discovered metal and decided to change their style and just fucking went for it all out. They took it way too seriously and the results are incredible. Let me state that this formula didn't work for maybe 80% or 90% of the punk bands who went metal, but in this case they wound up being a way better metal band than punk band; really the exception to the rule. This band started out sounding a lot like GBH or VARUKERS and their first LP is pretty great in that style. The second LP was just okay, but then they turned to metal and this 12" EP just knocked it out of the park. A true masterpiece. It's not on Combat Core, but I have to insert it here due to its place at the pinnacle of the genre.

Their LP *Forward into Battle* came out in the UK first, but Combat Core licensed it for the US release. It's not quite as good as *To the Ends of the Earth* but that's kind of like saying gold isn't quite as good as diamonds, because this LP is metal-core gold through and through. The cover art is from a Frank Franzetta calendar and early pressings have a line down the middle of the image like someone just ripped it out of a comic book, folded it up and mailed it to the record label to use for the cover art. This band had some of the very best guitar work of any of the crossover era bands—not necessarily super fast or technical, but really catchy blazing and wild riffs and leads that you never forget. Some of these songs (like "Wall of Steel") are beyond epic, with really next level guitar playing that few bands can equal. This band also looked great, with crimped hair, denim vests, etc. They actually came through town a few years ago and played a local metal club. I had been boycotting this club for ten years due to its ties to local Nazis, but had to break my boycott, because I just could not miss ENGLISH DOGS. They played only material from *Forward into Battle* and *To the Ends of the Earth*, and it was spellbinding and epic in the way seeing a legacy band never is. ENGLISH DOGS went on to release *Metalmorphosis* on the metal label Under One Flag, but that record was just okay. They returned to Combat Core for *Where Legend Began*, which was a pretty uproarious attempt at a rock opera fantasy concept record. While I admire the audacity of this approach, it's just not a very good LP. My copy is in mint condition, because I never listen to it, but *To the Ends of the Earth* and *Forward Into Battle* are well worn from regular heavy use.

Combat Core also put out two records by big-selling UK Acts, GBH and EXPLOITED. Not either band's best material by a long shot. EXPLOITED's *Jesus is Dead* was a 12" EP. I guess the best thing I could say about it is: if you like EXPLOITED, you'd probably like this record. GBH was really popular in the '80s, very much more popular than they are today. Pretty much everyone had their records and knew their songs. But by the time *Oh No.. It's GBH Again* came out, the band had probably reached their peak. The songs are pretty solid GBH material, but lack the spark of the previous records. Which is about the same thing I would say about GBH's LP of the following year *Midnight Madness and Beyond*, mentioned here less for its association with crossover than for it's place on the Combat Core roster. The cover art is pretty cool though.

Combat Core had one more trick up its sleeve, and that was stealing CORROSION OF CONFORMITY from Death/Enigma for the follow-up to the stone cold classic *Animosity* LP. *Technocracy*, from 1987 was one of this label's last releases, and to me it was a real disappointment. I wrote about it in my "Buzzkill" column a while back. I know some people are pretty into this record, but after *Animosity*, this one is just a let down.



Wir tanzen mit Faschismus
Und roter Anarchie
Eins, zwei, drei, vier
Kammerad, komm tanz mit mir
Laibach, "Tanz Mit Laibach"

You probably won't be surprised to learn that Laibach has been accused of glorifying fascism in the past to which their response has been: 'We are fascists as much as Hitler was a painter.' Which I assume means they are *fascists, they're just very, very bad at it.*
John Oliver. "Laibach goes to North Korea," *Last Week Tonight* #45 (7/19/15)

It's been close to a century since Karl Radek popularized the concept of National Bolshevism. It was June of 1923, after the successful workers' revolution in Russia and a failed one in Germany which ended the first World War. As the Secretary of the Third International—the Communist International or Comintern—Radek hoped to rally support and solidarity among disaffected German rightwing soldiers, veterans and rank-and-file nationalists for the besieged Soviet Union. The goal was to firm up an alliance between the German *Reichswehr* and the Russian Red Army, irrespective of the interests of their different working classes, and to this end Radek made an infamous speech in the Executive Committee of the Comintern called "Leo Schlageter: The Wanderer into the Void," which was endorsed by both Stalin and Zinoviev. Radek praised Schlageter—a conservative WWI veteran who joined the German paramilitary *Freikorps* to suppress the German workers' soviet revolution of 1918-19 and who then was executed for sabotage against the French occupation army of the Ruhr—as a national hero and argued that "[t]he insistence on the nation in Germany is a revolutionary act."

Long before the present-day red-brown alliances in Russian politics, over a decade before the Hitler-Stalin Nonaggression Pact, Radek's "Schlageter Line" imposed an opportunistic alliance between para-fascist ex-military types and Germany's revolutionary leftwing working class via the ever-pliant German Communist Party, the KPD. This was a strategy of National Bolshevism for the KDP and the German working class, ultimately to defend the Soviet Union and further that country's interest in an alliance with Germany. To seal this pact with the devil, KDP *Zentrale* shut down the insurrectionary Hamburg Uprising by the district KP *Wasserkante* on October 22, 1923. Radek and Trotsky quickly defended the decision to stop the insurrection by condemning the uprising as premature. What followed was nearly a decade of on again/off again collaboration between the KDP and the NSDAP in the streets and the *Reichstag* against the SDP-dominated Weimar Republic.

This attraction to National Bolshevism on Radek's part came as much from his personal experiences in Moabit prison trying to convert reactionary German nationalists to Bolshevism as from his reading of two renegade Hamburg communists, Laufenberg and Wolffheim, who coined the term National Bolshevism. These national communists promoted the idea of a dictatorship of the proletariat in the service of German nationalism, the formation of a German Red Army, and a German-Soviet nationalist-socialist alliance in an all-out war against the US and UK. Sound familiar? Radek's temporary and purely tactical "Schlageter Line" was part of a shameful history of Soviet and KDP intransigence, sectarianism and double-dealing that ultimately delivered the German working class into the hands of the Nazi Party in power, much as the PCE's (Spanish Communist Party) machinations and red terror finally betrayed the Spanish proletariat to the clutches of Franco. Radek's contribution to this debacle was to legitimize, for the first time as an official representative of the Comintern, the synthesis of right and left, ultra-nationalism with revolutionary socialism in Germany, that was the prototype for the obsessions of fascism's leftwing thereafter.

To be fair, there were plenty of left-leaning German fascists in the 1920s and 30s, both inside the Nazi Party (Röhm, Gregor and Otto Strasser) and outside (van den Bruck, Jünger, Niekisch). And had the concept of National Bolshevism not existed in Germany by 1923, circumstance would have contrived something analogous, mirroring a common argument made about Hitler. But the initial willingness on the part of the Bolsheviks to cultivate National Bolshevism in Germany came to bite the Left on its ass. (Victor Serge said of the Schlageter tactic: "It's playing with fire—all right let's play with fire!") The ideal of a red-brown, Soviet-Nazi, Russian-German alliance has been a goal of leftwing fascism ever since. From the NSDAP breakaway Combat League of Revolutionary National Socialists through the ultra-Zionist, anti-imperialist LEHI (Stern Gang) in Mandated

Palestine to the left Peronist FAR-*Montoneros* guerrillas in Argentina's "Dirty War," the archetypal synthesis of revolutionary left and right epitomized by National Bolshevism has recurred over and over, much like a periodic, virulent outbreak of herpes. Most recently, the anarcho/ultra milieu has witnessed @ publisher *AK Press* accuse white South African journalist, writer and *AK* author Michael Schmidt of being a secret National Anarchist in league with Troy Southgate.

AK Press did its due diligence, thoroughly investigated Schmidt's background, and determined that the rumors of his involvement in National Anarchism were true despite his outward adherence to an odd-duck anarchist Platformism. So *AK* stopped publication of his current book, removed his previous books from its inventory, and disseminated its lengthy, damning findings as widely as it could in the anarcho/ultra milieu. Schmidt's story is that he is an anarchist and a journalist who was engaged in legitimate research of fringe fascist elements, and that every fact dug up by his detractors has another more innocent explanation. I think that the evidence is overwhelming that Michael Schmidt is at present a National Anarchist-identified fascist. Now, I really don't care whether Schmidt infiltrated anarchism with his authentic NA fascist beliefs intact or simply developed his decentralized, tribal white nationalism "organically" over his time in the anarchist movement. The purported synthesis of revolutionary left and right that is at the core of National Bolshevism, National Syndicalism, National Anarchism, National Autonomism, *ad nauseam*—what this fascist tendency likes to call metapolitics—is a clear enough political signature for folks on the Left and the left of the Left to help screen against infiltration or "entryism," or even genuine conversion.

Well done.

The issue is not jurisprudence or a fair trial or innocent until proven guilty or incarceration. Libertarians forget that, in promoting voluntary association, they automatically authenticate voluntary disassociation; everything from *caveat emptor* to outright ostracism. The anarcho/ultra milieu is just that—a milieu—and not a community, so its ability to put social pressure to bear is limited. Nevertheless, the option exists and needs to be exercised.

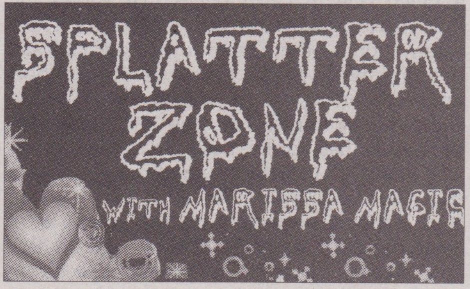
The initial opportunism and sectarianism that marked Bolshevik Russia's attempt to set up a German National Bolshevik sock puppet does not account for the ongoing opportunism and parasitism of this fascist tendency's constant attempts to piggy back onto the Left. But neither does it set up some sort of equivalency between socialism and fascism. This is not an argument either from Hanna Arendt's sophisticated if misguided thesis in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* or its dumbed down High School version that, if one travels far enough along the extremes of either political Left or Right one circles back around toward its supposed opposite, and thus that all political extremism is essentially the same. There are plenty of credible differences that make a true distinction between extreme Left and Right—libertarian and totalitarian—which I've covered in past columns. Unfortunately, this sophomoric understanding of politics persists, as does its flip side, a kneejerk contrarianism. So, when a mendacious former columnist proclaims on Facebook by analogy to the original American revolution that "This time it's TWO royal families," the Bushes and the Clintons, from which we must declare our independence by voting for either Bernie Sanders or Donald Trump, the sheer knuckle-dragging idiocy is breathtaking. He was never the sharpest tool in the shed, particularly when it's clear there's no exaggeration, hyperbole or parody intended in his political analysis, such as it is.

What is involved is a sentiment akin to *épater la bourgeoisie*, the rebellious, indiscriminate desire to stick it to the establishment, which needs to be critiqued. The post-Romantic Decadents of the *fin de siècle* were fond of skewering the cultural banality, economic regimentation and political conformity of the stodgy middle-class society of their day. In this they prefigured virtually every rebellious Bohemian youth culture that followed, from the *wandervogel* to punk rock. Michael "Bommi" Baumann expressed this best in *How it all Began/Wie Alles Anfing* when he wrote: "You still didn't feel like part of the left; but everything that was in opposition was good, including the neo-Nazis. [...] Fascism as such was in opposition though, and you found pure opposition better than this petit-bourgeois mediocrity. You considered everything good that didn't agree with it." Or, as Sean Aaberg of *Pork Magazine* crudely puts it in protesting what he considers our "increasingly uptight society," his magazine's rebellion for its own sake and swastika iconography is "not suitable for squares" and a way of "outing closet totalitarians."

As for Laibach's sly lampooning of similar left-right political lunacy, return to the postmodern *angst* which begins their song "Tanz Mit Laibach" and defines the *épater les bourgeois* motivating much fascist courting of the Left:

Wir alle sind besessen / Wir alle sind verflucht / Wir alle sind gekreuzigt / Und alle sind kaputt / Von Reiztechnologie / Von Zeitökonomie / Von Qualität das Lebens / Und Kriegsphilosophie

My personal blog is gamatiasz.wordpress.com. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@icloud.com.



I cried on the train to work today, or, I managed to not cry on the actual train to work today but I started crying when a homeless man was trying to politely ask for money and I was late for work and I said no, I'm sorry, I have to go to work. I'm late for work. And I'm working full-time but the pay schedule is weird so I only get paid once a month so I'm working full-time but still broke. Haven't really gotten paid yet, that's the end of the month and I'm like, I'm gonna do something nice for myself, I'm going to go out to lunch today or something but I don't have the money so I can't do that so instead I walk around the block while eating a peanut butter sandwich because my office (I have an office?) doesn't have any windows and only has a door to the public. And I'm walking around the block in a nice outfit that my mom bought me and I feel bad that I'm broke but also it's so nice that I have a mom who will buy me outfits to go to work. And how would I have gotten this job in the first place without a nice outfit?

I think I told you I'm a boss now and there are like seven people I'm supposed to be the boss of or supervise or whatever and I don't know what to call them. I keep calling them coworkers—they kind of are, right? I have no interest in being a boss really I find it uncomfortable and awkward. People apologize to me for being late and ask if they can go on a lunch break. I'm also the guy that has to deal with people when they say, "I want to speak to your manager." Today one of the student workers came into my office (I have an office?) and was just like, "My math classes are stressing me out, I can't work anymore this semester" and I just said "No problem" because yeah, passing math is probably more worthwhile than coming to work but now I gotta figure out how to get her shifts covered which involves talking to people and kind of bargaining with them. I have to pay attention to budget stuff and I have to purchase stuff (the student worker I don't like *loooooves* to remind me that we need dry erase markers) and I don't know how to do any of it and no one will really tell me. Sometimes I go and shelve books or pull books for reserves or just go hang out in the stacks in general and the librarians tell me I could just have some student workers do that, as if that work is a burden or annoying but it's a the part I actually enjoy. I wanna go back to my job where I got paid more and got to hang out in an attic all day by myself blasting free jazz and pushing various papers around. Boohoo.

Instead of working today so far I've sat in my office (I have an office?) and combed through the internet presence of the now for awhile defunct Uzi Rash looking for an explanation of the asshole sigil, a symbol that's been places in the oozey universe (Max said a rundown of meaning existed on the internet, I found none). But I was looking at all these things and thinking about the intense dullness I'm existing as lately. Is it depression? Is it working full-time? I find myself feeling resentful of the fact that my leisure time lines up with the leisure time of so many. I'm no longer twenty-two and able to never sleep and party hard and be chill the next day at work. Mozart played a show over the weekend and we absolutely slayed and my body has been crushingly sore ever since. Movement is pain. Life is pain. So I spend all this time at this job that eats away at the ideas I have about myself and then when I'm not at work I just blob through the hours because I'm so worn out because I'm old (I'm not old). Max works full time at a job where he stands and moves all day and still manages to be astoundingly prolific.

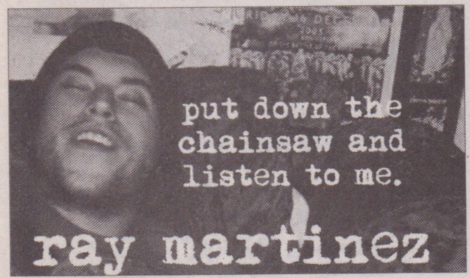
Somehow he still manages to be positive and excited about stuff and is constantly doing so many cool things and I'm in awe. I just want to go home and hide when it strikes five.

So I'm at my job eschewing responsibilities that may or may not need to get done and I may or may not get in trouble for not doing them but at this point I kind of don't care because everyone blows me off when I ask a question and if I fail to order more staples today no one will die. So instead I'm sifting through the web presence of the love of my life and I'm trying to figure out how to be a worthwhile human being. Trying to get out of my head and create another one. Another me or a persona. My last job I wore a wig and maybe it was worthwhile to have such a separation. I want my reality to be interesting and my alter ego to deal with paying rent. Right now my reality is just kind of endless blergh (I think maybe). Boohoo.

Grace asked me if I was going to do a year end Top Ten and I said no, I never do. It was easy when I had a monthly Top Ten because I had actually listened to so much stuff but really mostly lately I've just been doodling in a notebook and watching *X-Files*. She pointed out my love of the band Spray Paint and how they put out like five albums this year and I could just list those albums. I think they actually only put out two. And at work they wanted me to do a fucking Secret Santa and it was a moment where the person suggesting it is standing in front of you and there is no way to blow it off. Before I could suggest that she should organize, she suggested that I send out an email about it. It took me two hours to write a two line email because I juuuuuust diiiidn't waaaaant tooooo. I squeezed my eyes shut and hit send. I made it voluntary hoping that I wouldn't have to join in to even out the numbers. It was a five dollar maximum. I have no interest in giving or receiving some dingly shit to people I work with. I'd rather get tanked at a potluck and be forced to make awkward conversation with them for two hours. At least there would be snacks. An hors d'oeuvres table I could lean on.

Anyway so works a drag, I love Spray Paint, happy holidays, yadda yadda. Taking a mental note to take an attitude cue from Max and pack every free moment with weirdo life stuff. Stay positive. BOTTTOS.

Mozart, does love know no bounds?



Last Tuesday night I witnessed a murder.

I saw a seventeen-year-old shot over a dozen times.

The first bullet knocked him down in the middle of the street. The next fifteen made sure he wouldn't get up.

I wasn't close enough to tell exactly what happened. But I could tell that the kid was dead, and that the guy who killed him wanted him dead.

When it first happened, no one really talked about it.

Another dead Black kid in a bad neighborhood in Chicago.

That barely even makes the local news anymore. And, of course, people had their doubts about the whole situation. Especially since the kid had a knife—there was no question about that.

You don't bring a knife to a gunfight, that's simple logic.

But sometimes people bring guns to knife fights.

There used to be a time when people didn't resort to shooting right away. When a fight could be fair. One on one. Fist to fist. Knife to knife. Slashing, not stabbing. Prove your point, beat the guy, and leave a scar to remind them of the lesson. And if you used your fists to win over the guy with the knife, well, you probably wouldn't have to buy a beer in the neighborhood for a while.

But gang mentality has completely taken over the city.

Chicago has *always* been a gangster town. From the class driven, ethnic immigrant enclaves, to the blatant neighborhoodism that still reigns.

But at a certain point even the nativists and flag waving nationalists inadvertently embraced Mao's adage that "politics is war without bloodshed." The gangster Irish and Italians realized you could still muscle your way into getting what you want, but as a Ward Boss or Alderman you didn't need to have taped triggers and filed serial numbers to get it.

All it took was a good 50 some years of running the streets and the corners for them to figure that out.

By the late '60s the Black community figured it out too and one of their most well-known gangs started to go legit by consolidating their efforts politically on a neighborhood scale on the West Side of the city.

They started small, doing the kind of community things that you couldn't fault anyone for doing—even if you thought they were nothing but violent hoodlums. They started feeding poor kids in the neighborhood breakfast every day—hoping they could spread the program, and also gain some political traction and clout, further around the city.

But the same gangster Irish who had gone legit only a generation or two before had also learned another Maoist lesson inadvertently; "Power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

So they got their strongest remaining street gang to take care of the problem in the Old Chicago Way.

Out of a barrel of a gun.

It was a one-time thing, they said.

And they quoted a favorite saying by their recently legit gangster Italian friends:

"Mea Culpa."

And that was pretty much the end of that Black gang—just off the corner of Western and Monroe.

I would like to say that it's shockingly easy to kill a Black person in Chicago after nightfall, but there's really nothing shocking about it whatsoever. For the most part it's not even remarkable. It's just the way things work in the city.

You don't put ketchup on a hot dog, the Cubs fall apart by September, Black people die in the streets.

By the '90s, the old Chicago political machine that had kept its idea of law and order was losing steam and control and the gangs were finding the room to start making a very big comeback.

You wouldn't know it now, with all the young white artist types walking around Logan Square and Humboldt Park on the Northwest side and in Pilsen on the Southside, but the Latino gangs used to run those streets.

But after an attempt in the '90s to bring all the Latino gangs together to create an organized crime group, not unlike the Outfit of Italian gangsters, city officials started coming down *hard* and started locking everyone up and handing out 20-25 year sentences.

A few large scale busts in the mid/late '00s helped really clean up the neighborhoods of the Latin Kings as well—Operation Pesadilla in the Little Village/Pilsen neighborhoods being a rather successful one.

Just don't think they're still not there, though. They're just not as loud as they used to be. There's still 25,000 Latin Kings in Chicago alone. And every single King around the country ultimately answers to the Supreme Inca ruler, head of them all, right here in Chicago.

They may quiet down for periods of time, but gangs don't just *go away* in Chicago.

That being said, gangland murders are *not* surprising in this city, whose folklore and politics are covered in tribal bloodshed.

But there is still a cold logic of efficiency that runs through Chicago, and certain things are considered too extreme, even to those who are the most extreme and lawless.

And recklessness is not efficient.

Chicago is a city built, literally, on efficiency.

It lays on an urban grid. Madison Street is block zero for North and South. State Street is block zero for East and West. All streets are marked with North, Side, East, and West in their names. Every block is a 100 address. Every eight blocks is a mile. You can stand on a street corner and know exactly how far, and in which direction any other intersection is.

So back to the murder I witnessed.

It was one of the most reckless things I have ever seen.

So *very* un-Chicago.

A gang murder in a way that could only bring unnecessary heat and visibility to a group that's trying to muscle even more power and clout for themselves.

Now, while I completely understand gang mentality and culture, I'm not one to glorify or romanticize it whatsoever. To me, all the possible positives are *far* outweighed by the inevitable negatives. Being a part of something that is bigger than yourself isn't worth it if it *requires* that you spill another's blood.

So here's this gang—and what I witnessed was definitely a gang murder by way, no questions about it.

Here's this gang that has had a lot of serious press brought down on them recently.

Apparently they've had a secret torture facility that they were operating for *years* in

the neighborhood four blocks directly south of mine. Of all people the British press (*The Guardian*) uncovered the whole thing—and have been continually reporting on it.

If that wasn't "shocking" enough (again, try to shock a Chicagoan with a report of gang violence) it was revealed that current Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and his political machine, were trying to downplay an insane story involving *decades* of systematic gang torture and violence.

Eventually that story proved to actually be true and it actually reached the courts.

Unfortunately for Mayor Emanuel, sometimes there *is* such a thing as bad press. And that bad press is actually *really fucking goddamn bad press*.

Apparently from the '70s through the '90s a well-known, publicly liked personality was actually leading a faction of a notorious city-wide gang that was regularly kidnapping, extorting, and torturing residents of the city.

Their tactics were absolutely ruthless, often times toeing (and crossing) the line of pure sociopathy—yet, this Chicagoan has to admit that they were also surprisingly clever and morbidly impressive.

Did you know that if you beat someone on the head with an object of substantial heft and weight, yet with a natural amount of give—like, say, a phone book—that you could inflict serious, longlasting, neck and spinal damage without leaving a single bruise or superficial marking?

That's the kind efficiency that makes us Chicagoans proud.

For better and worse.

The results of these allegations was a court ruling—because this gang is, in a very real way, a legitimized organization in Chicago (as so many gangs do eventually become)—that the city agreed to actually pay reparations on their behalf to the surviving torture/assault victims and their families.

The first ever US city to do so.

Chicago has always had a flair for breaking ground with its Black population. Be it with jazz, the blues, rock'n'roll, *The Chicago Defender*, soul music, hitting Martin Luther King Jr. in the head with a brick during a march, the Chicago Bulls of the 1990s, or reparations for gang violence, Chicago has always help pave the way.

Oh—I now realize that I might have been a little muddy with my examples.

Let me clarify things.

The torture facility? That had *nothing* to do with the cases of systematic torture in the '70s, '80s, and '90s that brought to the courts. The torture chamber was from a few years ago.

We're talking about two or three completely separate generations of the same gang going about physically torturing the citizens of Chicago. And getting away with it.

For the most part.

So now, when all the heat in the local press is down on them the hottest it's ever been, they go and murder a seventeen-year-old kid in the middle the street.

On video.

Multiple videos, actually.

Such an utterly gross disregard for efficiency!

Having *some* sense about them, a few of the gang members went to the Burger King next to the scene of the crime and convinced the people working there to let them check out their personal CCTV footage of the whole thing.

Pretty easy to manage when you're the biggest, most well-known, and deadliest gang in the city.

That footage? Well, 86 minutes of it disappeared.

But unfortunately for them, not all the footage taken that night went away.

So, while people didn't think much this murder at the time, when they saw the footage that was released to the press and the media, they actually got upset.

This wasn't just another dead Black kid in Chicago.

This wasn't just another gang murder.

This was a turning point. A boiling point. A time for a community and a city to address the problem of gang violence being far too out of control in the city of Chicago, and the problem of the city as political entity ignoring it for far too long.

Last Tuesday I witnessed the murder of Laquan McDonald by the Chicago Police Department.

So did the entire city of Chicago, and the rest of the world, because a Cook County Circuit Court judge ordered the Chicago police department to publicly release the dashcam footage of Officer Jason Van Dyke shooting Laquan *sixteen* times in the middle of Pulaski Street.

Like I said before, this city has *always* had gangs.

And the bigger, more organized, more powerful, gang—the one with the most *clout*—won that fight.

The thing about Chicago, though, is that when it comes to our street gangs we've always walked that tightrope of a gang's thuggery and violence using their usefulness and efficiency as balance.

This recent gangland murder of Laquan McDonald may just be the final straw to get this city to finally rally together against the current and most recklessly dangerous gang problem we've faced in decades.

People of all kinds are actually taking to the streets. Taking to the media. They're tearing down Christmas trees downtown in Millennium Park and they're forming human chains to block people from shopping at the high-end stores on State Street. They're not just having neighborhood meetings, localized rallies, and community awareness benefit events. They're making scenes in the ways that make people actually take notice.

They're getting face to face with the gang members themselves, in the middle of the same streets those gangbangers shoot people down in, and making it very public that *all of* us are sick of living in fear of them.

Gangs, and their organized violence, have always been a part of this city.

Sometimes they win, sometimes they don't.

Let's just hope that the good guys come out on top of this one.

Chicago deserves it.

We all do.

ENDNOTES:

1) If you wanna read up on *real* Chicago 20th century politics, I recommend: Mike Royko's *Boss: Mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago*, Joshua Bloom's *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, Studs Terkel's *Race*, Karen Abbott's *Sin in the Second City: Madams, Ministers, Playboys, and the Battle for America's Soul*, Terrence Hake's *Operation Graylord: The True Story of an Untrained Undercover Agent and America's Biggest Corruption Bust*, Thomas Dyja's *The Third Coast: When Chicago Built the American Dream*, and John M. Hagedorn's newest book, *The Insane Chicago Way: The Daring Plan by Chicago Gangs to Create a Spanish Mafia*.

2) The city of Chicago recently decided to steal my street. Over the course of the past two months, trucks full of gravel and dirt have woken me daily at 7:00 a.m. to fill in the freight line viaduct at the east end of my block. What used to be a thoroughfare is now a dead end. Our street, and the next street to the south, the only two residential thoroughfares, were filled in. The street (Rockwell Street) that now has a gravel wall butting up against it is the line of political demarcation of the Easternmost edge of our neighborhood—East Garfield Park. *Coincidentally*, this is the first official neighborhood of what is unofficially the Black West Side. Not a single person on either block that had their street walled off got a letter, a phone call, or a notice from the city about the decision to do this. To my knowledge no one has heard back from the alderman about it either—I know he definitely hasn't gotten back to my calls. Still, everyone on my block a sense of humor about it. "Surprised it took 'em so long to cut us niggers off—no offense…," my next door neighbor cracked over beers on the porch. When it comes to this city, you gotta laugh so you don't explode.

3) Issue #1 of *No Friends* is officially sold out. Issue #2 will be out by the time you read this. Keep checking nofriendszine.com for info. We're still looking for contributors: interviewers, writers, photographers, artists, haters. We want whatever it is you got to offer. Email us at nofriendszine@gmail.com.

4) I keep forgetting to give my personal email. Write me, if you want! While it's nice to occasionally hear from the *MRR* Overlady that people have something to say about what I write, I would much rather hear straight from you and write you back directly. Who knows, we might be able to (dis)agree one-on-one! You can reach me at stayinchicago@hotmail.com

Disclaimer: There are some things in this world I take rather seriously; like smoking, reading, or writing. There are some things I don't; like beer, movies, or year-end top tens. Over the years I've talked to a significant amount of people about the latter. More often than not,

I've been amazed by the amount of work and gravity they put into this strange tradition.

Some work on it all year all long. Filing records as months go by, taking notes, putting them in categories, by month, format, etc.

Some, when the year comes to an end, try and carefully re-listen to all the records they've acquired or heard in the past twelve months.

Some ask themselves dead serious questions, like:

"Does this particular record really deserve to be on the list?"

"I've got only one spot left: which record am I gonna pick, considering there are still three of them on my pre-list?"

"Most of the bands on my list are from North America — Does that make me some kind of cheerleader for imperialism?"

"Should I put the records on a scale from one to ten, or 'in no particular order'?"

"Most of the bands on my list are also gonna be on everyone else's list this year. Doesn't that make me some kind of sheep?"

And I can't even count the times I've heard or read some poor motherfucker say something along the lines of "Shit, how can one even make such a list? It's so scary to me, to decide which records are the 'best' of the year… I ain't no specialist, man, I ain't no music critic… No, really, I'm just a normal punk—No way I can do this."

While I generally think it's great when people treat such trivial tasks seriously, in this particular case, I personally can't. Like, even if my life depended on it, I still couldn't. It's in my DNA—That's my best explanation for it. When the year comes to an end and the current *Maximum Rocknroll* coord shoots us the traditional email asking for The Top Ten, I wait 'til the last minute and throw in the first handful of records that come to my mind. Hence, I usually end up with a mix of records I've actually listened to all year long, and records I've heard once or less than once (sometimes I've just heard a couple mp3s) in the past few days or weeks, and that for some reason, I think would look cool on The List. And I always, always forget something. And that's ok—we're talking about records here, not about bombs or cigarettes.

Anyway, just wanted to be clear about this.

Now, the music.

There are two albums I listened to more than ten times in 2015, and I'd say I'll probably still blast both once in a while in 2025. The second full-length by LIFE STINKS, San Francisco's self-proclaimed only punk band, is called *You'll Never Make It*. The vinyl came out at the tail-end of the year, but I bought the mp3s (something I don't usually do) the day they were released, hence I can safely call it my record (or, well, my bunch of mp3s) of the year. A while back, I wrote a whole column about their first album. I was drunk, but you get the idea. Since then, I've played it more often than any record from the 21st century. I was anxious about the new one—Would it be as good as the first? Well, yeah. Not better, but just as good. The recipe hasn't changed. FANG + FLIPPER + VELVET UNDERGROUND + ALBERT AYLER = LIFE STINKS. Those are some intense references, but they pull it of. I can't believe they're not the biggest rock band in the world right now. It's everything I wanna hear on most days—slow, rocking, profound, moving, dark, deep, nihilistic, human jams. Inventive & unique. Crazy saxophone & guitar solos. Perfect recording courtesy of the unbeatable Mikey Young. This band make me wish my English was better, so that I could write what I want and the way I want about them.

Then there is the ZONE INFINIE LP. They're from Saint-Etienne, Lyon and Grenoble. It's their debut recording. I've covered it in this space before, and I'm supposed to interview them for Maximum *Rocknroll* in the coming months, so I won't write too much about it. It's French Punk with a capital F and capital P. It sounds way more conventional than LIFE STINKS, yet somehow just as unique. If we were to describe LIFE STINKS as the sonic equivalent of a William Burroughs or Thomas Bernhard novel, then ZONE INFINIE would be, say, Bukowski or John Fante. The first could be considered "experimental punk" or "literary punk." I say "punk", not "music", because I'm aware that the musical equivalent of a Burroughs novel wouldn't be LIFE STINKS, it would be something a bit more fried, like a Burroughs fucked up sound collage, or that improvised band from Lyon called MOTHERFUCKING, or WOLF EYES or whatever the noise reviewers from *The Wire* listen to. While the second could be "street punk," if the term wasn't so loaded. Anyway, you should check them out on bandcamp. Or buy the record, if you're that kinda gal.

Another cool 2015 LP is the URANIUM CLUB one, which is actually their demo tape pressed to vinyl. It reminds me of the second EDDY CURRENT full-length, not because it sounds like it, thankfully, but because it's so well-done, so clear-sounding, and falling somewhere in-between "garage" and "post-punk", like a more impatient *Pink Flag* era WIRE, a more serious (?) DEVO, or a less goofy CONEHEADS.

In the demo tape department, there are three recordings I've enjoyed and played numerous times. All three are by French bands, or at least bands with French members.

I've covered WARNOAR in this space before. I compared the delivery of their singer to the one from an older French band called STALAG. Musically it's straightforward punk rock, earnest and on the cheap side, which I don't mean as a diss, but on the contrary. It's melodic, but not in an excessive way. Catchy and well-recorded, but far from overproduced. It's everything fans of MASSHYSTERI or TERRIBLE FEELINGS will never understand. It's the kind of punk I like.

Then there is LITIGE. They're from Lyon. Currently, them and ZONE INFINIE are the two local bands people seem to agree on. For good reasons, I'd say. Like WARNOAR, LITIGE play straightforward punk rock, except I hear a slight, discreet yet defining indie-rock vibe in the vocals. What I mean is that their singer is actually singing, not screaming, yet it's clear she didn't take singing lessons or anything like that. Music-wise, LITIGE uses simple, powerful beats and riffs, with power-chords progressions you've probably heard before, except they make them their own in a seemingly careless, unabashed way. What I mean is: you could use these exact same chords and fail, but the way LITIGE uses them, they win.

The third and last demo tape I dug is from DIKTAT. Unlike the two previous bands, DIKTAT doesn't really seem to care about conventional catchiness or melodies. They don't owe as much to the RAMONES as they do to DISCHARGE and TOTÄLITÄR. These guys are almost hardcore veterans at this point, having played in such and such bands and toured the world intensively over the last decade and longer, so the musicianship is of course tight as hell…What really makes the band for me are the vocals. I've been waiting a long time for such an early '80s Swedish hardcore inspired band to sing in French in a discernable way. Now I got it. Musically, before I heard them, one of their friends described them to me as, "GASMASK TERRÖR without the solos." Fair enough, except there are some solos, of course.

The most intense live band I saw all year was VEXX, no question. I was so thrilled during their set that I jumped out the window! Luckily for me, the gig was on the ground floor. I'm not sure what else to tell you about VEXX. You've heard them, right? Best drummer and most passionate singer in the game. The two other guys aren't bad either. It's punk for tough cowgirls and STOOGES fans. Not because both bands sound alike, but let's just say if Iggy was a lady, then she would sing in VEXX.

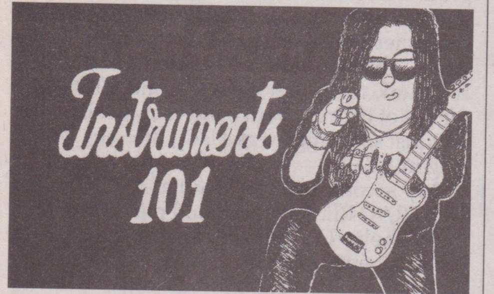
My second favorite live band of the year was TRAITRE. A French band playing moody, melancholic Oi! for the unemployed, with nothing better to do on a rainy day than stare at brick walls and closed-down factories through wet windows. Which reminds me of the early '00s in Paris, when my mates and I would joke around, imagining a future trend in punk called "Emoi!": a mix of emo and Oi! TRAITRE doesn't sound like this, thankfully, but just thought I'd throw the concept in here. It's yours if you want it, of course. Not much to say about it, except their set was moving, well-played, tough and catchy. They've got a 7" and a demo tape. Check them out. They're from Lille.

Then there are the two MYSTIC INANE EPs that came out this year. Crucial jams, one of a kind, but with a heavy (early) SACCHARINE vibe. Cool shit. The tracks I heard by the WORLD were killer danceable punk, reminiscent of *Cut*-era SLITS, but I'm not sure they've even released anything in the physical dimension? I also enjoyed everything I heard by CCTV and the CONEHEADS, but who doesn't…And fuck, how could I forget about the SUBURBAN HOMES? Their first 7" was great, but the new one is a modern classic with the naive British charm of TV PERSONALITIES mixed with the nonchalance of the singer from the SAINTS. "Conformity in the UK" is a bloody hit, and my hopes are high for their upcoming LP. I also liked DAWN OF HUMANS and LA MISMA from NYC when they played in Lyon. DAWN OF HUMANS played in a bar with a "no nudity" rule, and instead of being shitty about it, their singer got even more inventive, wrapping himself up in a giant plastic bag in which he hid with his mic, etc. LA MISMA surprised me a lot! Way more unique-sounding than their 7". GOVERNMENT FLU is a Polish straightedge hardcore band with a bunch of records out, and

they were great when I saw them in a practice room, at the border of Alsace and Germany. TAULARD were excellent both times I saw them, but that's a given. Same for GASMASK TERRÖR—at this point this band is a damn war-machine when they play live. Their new album is out now, by the way. PERVERS & TRUANDS from Saint-Etienne sound better all the time, and fans of MYSTIC INANE or LIFE STINKS could dig them. FAUX DÉPART from Lyon were promising in a sloppy, teenage punk way (even if all the members have grey hair). Looking forward to their first tape.

And that's about it, really. These days I don't listen to music as obsessively as I used to, a lot of what I hear is well-played and seems to come from people who studied their punk carefully, but to me it unfortunately lacks a bit of personality or spontaneity. The bands I mentioned in this column are the few that, for various reasons, made me feel like it was still worth it to give a shit about new punk music in 2015. Thanks to all of them.

Hopefully there will be more in 2016.



The Tone Stack

What I will refer as the *tone stack* through this entire column is made of the bass, treble, and middle pots found on most guitar tube amps.

For quite some time, I was using the treble, middle, and bass pots on my amps like I'd do with a stereo hi-fi set up. Back then, I was seriously thinking that, if you put everything at noon you could get a flat response, but I'd later discover how wrong I was. And I really was, because a guitar amp is nothing like a hi-fi amp, they both work very differently. A hi-fi set-up is designed to sound as flat as possible, to respect the music played from the audio source, while a guitar amp doesn't provide a flat sound at all. It is voiced to enhance the frequencies of a guitar, with a signal that is pretty much never clean, and full of compression, thus it doesn't respect the full frequencies of a record.

But, besides the voicing of the amp, and the way some frequencies are filtered inside the amp to enhance the sound of an electric guitar, the way that the *tone stack* is designed in tube amps, makes it very different than a regular hi-fi set up. The reason is that the *tone stack* is not working like a regular equalizer from your music player, where you can dial more or less of a certain frequency. Inside a tube amp, lays the *tone stack*, which is obviously not an equalizer, for the simple reason that you can't add more of a frequency, but only cut some of it. The *tone stack* is a passive device (a passive device is a device that doesn't need any power to function. As an example, a tube is not a passive device—you have to feed some power to the tube to make it work. You can only dial each pot to filter some frequencies to the ground.

And now you might ask yourself: "So if I want a flat response, I must not turn all the pots at noon, but just turn them full up on the amp." Well, the short answer to this is a no. It's a little trickier than that. See, when you turn one of the three pots, it also dials up the sound of the other pots. But let me first explain why we call this thing the *tone stack*. Inside an amp you have one or more gain stages. You can consider that gain stages are used to turn a small voltage into a bigger one, with each gain stage making that voltage always bigger. These gains stages are linked together by one component, which is a capacitor (you can look up what a capacitor is on the internet if you want to see what it looks like; along with a resistor it's one very common electronic component that can be found on pretty much everything these days starting with your computer and you phone). The rating of these capacitors is used to voice the amp and filter some frequencies through the different gain stages. If you take it a step further and use three pots (a pot is a variable resistor, it's just a resistor which you can dial up the value), capacitors and resistors, and you stack them together in a certain way, then you can dial up which frequencies you want to let pass or remove from the original guitar signal. Simple as that? Well, not really. Those who know, please indulge this very sketchy explanation for the mere mortals that don't want to fully embrace the electronic world we live in.

Now back into science mode for a minute. If you solder a pot, a resistor, and a capacitor together in a specific order, then you have a device that can remove high frequencies or low frequencies. That's what we call a high-pass filter or a low-pass filter. A high-pass filter lets sounds above a set frequency through, and is formed by a capacitor followed by a resistor. A low-pass filter lets sounds below a set frequency through, and is formed by a resistor followed by a capacitor. It's not that tricky, right? It's just the way you solder things together.

If you're still reading this, I'm glad you've made it that far, because this is where the real fun starts. Let's take one very common *tone stack*, the one that can be found on pretty much every Marshall amp. This one is called the FMV tone stack, which stands for Fender-Marshall-Vox. The name makes it clear that it was used by Fender (especially on the Tweed Bassman), Marshall, and in a way by Vox too. The FMV tone stack makes the guitar signal hit the treble pot first. The treble control is not a simple more or less top-end knob, it's a balance control between the product of a high-pass filter (on the right of its dial) and the filter created downstream (left of the dial) by the next two controls in the stack: bass and mid. In short, the treble pot is more like a blend control from the two other pots. Get it?

Keep calm, here's the good news: the bass control is the only one that acts mostly like it should. If we now get that the treble is a high-pass filter, now we want the exact opposite, a low-pass filter. All in all the bass pot will allow you to add or remove bass frequencies in a sensible way. But keep in mind that these pots are all stacked, which means that they are tied together. When the resistance of the treble pot only affects the treble filter, the resistance of the bass pot affects the bass filter and the treble filter. So, when you're dialing the bass pot, the treble is also being dialed too.

The middle control is the last one in the stack and that is very significant. It is kind of a similar design to the bass pot in the sense that it is a low-pass filter, but it is tied straight to the ground and it does have a huge impact on the sound. The mid knob, in addition to its other duties, controls how loudly the entire signal leaves the *tone stack*. Yes, that is really important. In short, with a FMV tone stack, if you aggressively scoop your mids you are confused by tone and trying to avoid as much of it as possible, a grounded mid pot is not just reducing mids but eliminating much of the rest of the amp's sound.

The cream of the crop here, is that, even if the FMV tone stack (bass, middle, and treble) is one of the most popular designs inside the tube amp world, it is not the only one. The bass and treble tone stack from Fender amps is one thing, while the bass and treble tone stack from Vox amps is another thing, and the Hiwatt tone stack is nothing like anything quoted above. Actually, the Hiwatt tone stack is a very different beast than the FMV tone stack. If you want a flat sound you have to dial down the mids close to none, and have all the other pots (bass, treble, and presence) set to noon.

Yes, it's a very confusing mess, but what I've told you above is still pretty accurate to a lot of amps nowadays, because the FMV tone-stack is a very common design in tube amps. The pots will still pretty much interact in the way described above, but the frequencies they dial might differ from one to another. As an example, I'd say that the Vox tone stack is very confusing, because the treble pot is a balance between the middle and treble frequencies you want to dial in. That's one of the reasons these amps sound so bright and full of treble. Every time you turn the treble pot up, it will remove some mid frequencies and add only more treble.

Anyway, if you want to toy with a software to figure out how the frequencies are altered from a pot to another. You can download a small software named Tone Stack Calculator for free, and tweak a few different famous tone stacks named after tube amp companies.

This is one subject I wanted to address since day one, and it is definitely not the funniest of them all but once you get it, it will open a whole new door to the way you can mix up the sound of your tube amp with the other band members and it is very useful. And the cool thing about it is that it also apply for most tube bass amps too—how cool is that, right?

In the end, if you don't get all that technical rant, at least keep in mind that these three pots on your amp are all very interactive, so use them the best you can from your two ears.
instrumentsoneohone@gmail.com

PS: If you're in the Bay Area and care about getting smarter while having fun, I really recommend visiting the Exploratorium. I had a lot of fun there, and the whole room dedicated to electricity and sound is wonderful. There are a few free days and reduced rates, especially for Bay Area residents. It's all written on their website.

Unemployed Dude 1: What the hell are you dressed up for?
Unemployed Dude 2: Yeah, where's the war?
Skinner: ...Up your ass.
—Saint Skinner in Suburbia

"We can't close our eyes to the plight of the cities. ...Kids, you noticing all this plight?"
—Den Mother to The Gang, Clark Griswold

Take My Shoes Off and Throw Them in the Lake

Well, PATRIOT cancelled on Take This Bird and Shove it Fest. Sad faces all around. One of the gang stormed off to his room when he heard the news and for the next five hours all we heard were his gasping sobs and "Cadence From the Street" on repeat. Kinda pathetic, but I understand. Even though I was disappointed the gang and I had a great time. Hostile City really knows how to throw a party. Katie and I drove into Philly for the third day of the fest. We got to the show in time to see the end of BANGED UP. Their set was good but a little... banged up. We missed the DROOGETTES which I wasn't bummed about, but then I heard they were great so who knows. Maybe they're not just a gimmick. We were excited to finally see the CHARLEY FEW. Nice dudes and their set was solid. LEGION 76 and THUNDER & GLORY both impressed us. LEGION 76 have a classic Philly Oi! sound that I can't get enough of. DUFFY'S CUT was a change of pace and got mostly the punx dancing, which was a surprise. The highlight of the night was ASSAULT & BATTERY. They slammed the audience from start to finish. There's like six dudes in that band and everyone but the drummer was right on the edge of the stage. Top street punk stuff.

BAD ASSETS from Detroit were good, but didn't deliver like I expected. During their song, "Detroit Diamonds," their singer Ralph did that thing where he jumped off stage to show the audience how to dance to his band. The gang and I were grateful for the opportunity to learn. The reason I wasn't running into everyone like an asshole was because I had not the knowledge to do so! Now we know! By the time BAD ASSETS was wrapping up it was passed my bedtime. BLANKS 77 was getting on stage but I had some turkey leftovers to smash into my face back at Katie's mom's pad. We missed MURPHY'S LAW and the UNSEEN. Like the DARKBUSTER song, I hate the UNSEEN. And maybe it's cuz I'm a wimp raised on NOFX but MURPHYS LAW ain't my cup of bong-water. All in all, it was a great night and I heard the whole thing was a success. We'll be back for next year no doubt.

On the Oi! front this month we got some goodies! First up is NO TIME from here: Pittsburgh! They just released a three-song promo tape in anticipation of an upcoming 12" on Phobiact and Six Feet Under Records. The songs are, "Anti-Social Today," "No Enemies," and "You'll Get Yours." Read some lyrics from the last song: "He's a pedophile scumbag, a real sick fuck / And the church he works for is gonna cover it up / A fate you can't outrun / A debt to be paid for the things you've done / It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when / You'll fucking get yours in the end." NO TIME don't cosign bullshit. The band probably likes BLITZ a lot. But it's not as overpowering or derivative an influence as some other bands playing around today. We're eager to hear the 12".

Next in line is SHOOT THE DOGS from Saint-Etienne, France. Their new album, We Are a Gang (on the bands own Dead Dog Records) is an obvious winner. The gang has been digging a lot of French stuff recently and SHOOT THE DOGS only reinforces our opinion that France is probably the top country for Oi! right now. Or tied with England. It's a tough call. Anyway, SHOOT THE DOGS has a more classic UK sound than say SYNDROME 81 or LION'S LAW (R.I.P.). There's a strong sense of melody similar to the CRACK or classic BUSINESS tunes. The more we listen to this record the more we like it. All lyrics are in English and topics stick pretty close to skinhead themes of revenge, soccer (football), friendship and personal stories of the street. Time to go dig up their album from 2010, Join Us.

From Glasgow comes the new band, ROYAL OI! with their debut album, Bootboys and Hooligans, out on Crowd Control, Rebel Sound, and Last Punkrockers. I heard their demo from 2014 and was interested but not blown away. Listening to the LP proper I've had a change of heart. The male/female vocals make this stand out from the crowd and the songwriting is anthemic and rousing. This is made for the terraces. Some song titles, "Punx and Skins, Football, Oi! and Rock'n'Roll," "Docs and Tattoos," "Skinhead Warrior"; cliché maybe, but not boring. Here's to ROYAL OI! "Skinhead music in my heart / Oi! Oi! Music never die!"

Japanese Oi! is a particular favorite of mine; mostly the second wave, when bands stopped trying to impersonate their British counterparts and forged their own sound and identity. Groups like BULL THE BUFFALOS, SLEDGEHAMMER, CANNONS, and GRUESOME are particular favorites. So when I heard SHOWDOWN, a new band from Kasugai, I was floored. Their debut EP is out on This Means War Records and its four songs of skinhead power. Side A gives you, "Way of Glory" and "Glory Forever." While the B-side presents "Flag" and "Mother Country." Sadly there is no insert or lyrics, but guessing by the song titles I'd say these three boys and girl probably like their country and their scene. The sound is pure early '90s Japanese Oi!: slower tempo, heavy bass and deep growled vocals with gang-backups. Other than the sub-par packaging this record was worth the price and time it took to arrive. Banzai!

Wrapping up this month is a split from the IDLE GOSSIP and DUFFY'S CUT brought to us by Oi! The Boat and Contra Records. Lemme get gripe outta the way: this is a 7" record with a big hole in the middle (also-known-as a 45). But this record plays at 33⅓ rpm. Whatever. It's a fun little record. Baltimore's the IDLE GOSSIP give a damn fine example of their self-styled "extreme R'n'B". It's a little garage, a lot PURPLE HEARTS and/or the MODS. There's a good swagger to their tunes, "All I Wanna Do" and "Baltimore Foxtrot." DUFFY'S CUT starts their side with "Milk Cow Blues". It's a tuff mod stomper with a heavy dose of organ. Their second song, "Ten Steps Back" is the winner for me. There's a good bluesy Eric Burdon quality to the vocals. DUFFY'S CUT is a standout band right now. Get this and dance around the kitchen.

Next month we we'll delve into some classic bands producing new material, some more RASH (that I don't hate) and a few other odds and ends. 'Til then that's it folks! Ears!

ENDNOTES:
1) Send all atta-boys to: americanbootgang@gmail.com
2) I've got a twitter: @turboandthegang but the only thing I've tweeted about is The Voice. As a person of size (POS), I'm really pulling for Jordan Smith.
3) Other than this column, the December issue of MRR had !zero! mentions of oi! Just a shame I felt needed calling to attention. That's all.

My last column was the first half of a tour diary I did when travelling for a week with Australian punk / power pop band Royal Headache on their 2015 US tour. This is the second half.

Thursday, August 27th, Baltimore @ Windup Space: It was time to leave Brooklyn behind for now and make the trip to Baltimore. By midday, we had loaded out and were on the road. We got there in late afternoon, taking longer than needed on the drive because we had the time. I had been to the house we were staying at that night just a few months prior when I'd toured through with another Australian band, Shovels. After reintroducing myself to the residents and carrying in anything that wasn't needed for the show, I got busy rolling a fresh batch of tour t-shirts the guys had picked up on the way out of Brooklyn. Apparently, this was their third printing of it—they were selling out in around five date increments. While we did this, Joe went over bass parts with Johnny for when he would cover Joe the last two shows in Brooklyn. Joe had to get back to Australia early because his other band, Bed Wettin' Bad Boys, would be going on tour in Japan the day after he got back.

After a few hours we drove over to the venue, unloaded the gear and set up the merch. There were two supports on this show,

Young Trynas, from Washington DC and locals, Quitter. Quitter blew me away! I wasn't expecting, well, an actual punk band to be playing the show. They dressed quirky with props but no real consistency between each other, with the singer slinking around and a synth filling a lead guitar part. Recorded, it sounds like a mix of proto-punk type Screamers and Dawn of Humans, but live it had a lot more density – great stuff either way!

I was trading off doing merch with Jeff, but he opted to do it most of the night so I could hang out with some friends that had come out to the show. Royal Headache put on a great show and the crowd got into it, any specifics at the show I don't remember because I was drunk. (Hurray!) After the show I left the Royal Headache guys for the night to hang out with my local friends.

Friday, Aug 28th, Philadelphia @ PhilaMOCA: I woke up and got breakfast before heading back to meet the guys. We left mid-afternoon, driving from Baltimore to Philly. Everyone sat quietly listening to Henry Rollins's *Get In The Van*, which just led to too many jokes about Gene October. We arrived at the tiny space that was PhilaMOCA, and after the usual "load-in-and-set-up-merch" routine, Jeff and I sat around bored and a bit tired until the show started.

The venue was one large room with a small capacity of roughly 200, meaning it packed out immediately. Honey Radar were surprisingly alright, sounding like spaced out garage pop. I was seriously just expecting all the supports to be kinda crap because the shows were a level above your regular punk show. Sheer Mag played half their set with one of their guitar amps not working properly, and once they realized it, they fixed it, and started their set again from the start. It sounded a lot better, but was weird to watch them play exactly the same set right after they'd almost finished it. It was their hometown and crowd but they seemed to get a little bit less of a welcomed reception than they had in other states. A tight crowd for Royal Headache, a few people moved around but as usual most just stood and watched the forever honestly raw expression of pain that is Shogun with a mic on a stage with his Sydney mates.

After the show we went back to party at one of Sheer Mag's member's houses, as the tour was coming to an end soon. I was burnt out and couldn't finish a drink, so Jeff and I just sat on their stoop talking about punk music for an hour or so until Lawrence approached and told us we were going to head back to Brooklyn that night. And so in the late hours of the night we made the last drive back to NYC.

Saturday, Aug 29th, Brooklyn @ Palisades: I couldn't see much of the show from the merch table at the back of the poorly ventilated sauna that was Palisades. Jeff and I had come together as a good team by this point and spent the time cracking jokes and making fun of people while alternating smoke breaks.

Flowers Of Evil was the first and only support of the two touring bands. They rocked out despite their fast, droney nothingness. The crowd was into it and I was disappointed to see they had put out a 12" for sale at the merch table on Deranged, a label I thought had some decent releases. Yeah, I wasn't really into this band. Who knows, maybe they're better recorded. Some people tried buying the record they had on display, but none of the band members ever came back to try sell any. At the end of the night they came to collect their records and I mentioned they would have sold some if they 'd been around. They didn't care, saying the record wasn't that good anyway.

Sheer Mag were on and I listened to the same set as every other night, and enjoyed the tunes just the same. I got half a set in then switched out with Jeff for a smoke. I spotted Lawrence sitting apart from the standing and chatting crowd, leaning against the venue wall and looking absolutely worn. We chatted briefly until the loud lady who hitched a ride with us from Philly to NY in the van last night showed up and I decided I'd rather hang out in the cramped sauna than listen to her laugh again.

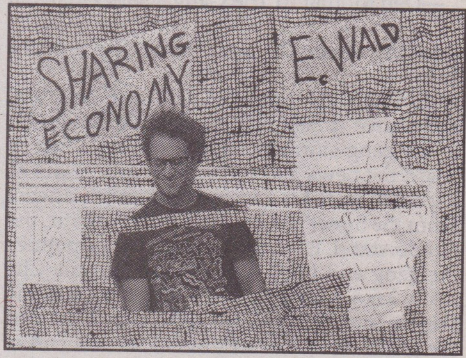
This was Johnny's first show out of two covering for Joe who had gone back to Australia early that afternoon. He made some mistakes, unable to keep up with the erratic changes and decisions other members of the band had become accustomed to. Shogun was reassuring and so was the crowd. He had only one chance to go over the bass lines and one chance to practice as a band, so props to him.

It was the end of the show. We loaded everything into the van then signed a card and collected a bunch of money to buy Kevin (from What's Your Rupture? Records) thank-you gifts for letting us stay at his house while we were in Brooklyn. Almost immediately afterwards, Shogun disappeared. Johnny went off to find a bar nearby that apparently a bunch of local friends had gone to. Kevin went off somewhere. Lawrence, Shortty, Jeff and I went back to Kevin's to drop off equipment, and instead of going back to meet Johnny, we ended up fucking around taking stupid photos in his apartment. Then we went to a bar down the block instead and, after a while, everyone congregated there. We ended up on the roof of Kevin 's apartment block in the early hours, drinking, smoking and ingesting other goodies. It was 5:00 a.m. and I had to wake in less than two hours to go with Shortty to drop Jeff off at the airport. It was time to go to bed.

Sunday, Aug 30th, Brooklyn @ St Vitus: I was sitting in a park in Brooklyn, feeling like death and watching Kevin and Lawrence throw ball. Today we had all done almost absolutely nothing, only leaving the house to get food. Otherwise, we were just laying around near fans and napping off hangovers and exhaustion from little sleep. It was an overcast and muggy day and that night was the last show of the tour at St Vitus Bar. Shortty and had woken up at 7:00 a.m. to drive Jeff to the airport. It went by like a painful dream, both of us holding it together through New York roads and a bad cab ride home, crashing out again once we got back to the apartment.

We dropped off the hired van with Jeff at the airport, so caught two cabs to the venue that night. The merch table was in a poor location, hidden behind the bar at the other side of the venue, so I dragged it to a walkway between the stage and the bar. Even so, I couldn't see the stage from that location. Jeff was gone and I couldn't be bothered swapping out with anyone because I would have wandered around aimlessly and exhausted. Not being able to push through the crowd of this sold-out show to see the bands anyway, I took the whole shift, happy to have a seat at least. So, no half-arsed review for this one. We went drinking afterward and I found a late night bodega that made dope take out vegan wraps and burritos. Needless to say, it was one of the best nights of my life.

Monday, Aug 31st: We said goodbye to the Sheer Mag dudes early this afternoon. The goodbyes between both bands were drawn out in hopes that this wasn't going to end but everyone realized that there was no way to drag it out any longer. Until next time.



Road Doggin with TSA and Asthma: Pt 1

You may have noticed my absence last issue. Here's what I was doing instead of writing a column:

TSA has been to the Northwest before. In fact, that is the only place we've ever been to outside of the Bay Area and Inland Empire (see MRR #391 for the sordid details). We've been up three times, slowly inching our way further north. In 2012 we made it to Olympia after a twisted routing that included Petaluma's Phoenix Theater (the historic 720-capacity venue was mostly empty, we played on the floor). In 2014 we got to Seattle along with our friends Asthma, through another weird route that included a 12-hour drive from Reno (where we played with a band of teens that covered Turbonegro and Sum 41 back to back) to Portland.

This time, we went international, charting our course up I-5 all the way to Vancouver, BC. For the second time, we went on tour with Asthma. I met Asthma in the summer of 2014. My friend Gladys Bleyle of Violent Change was working at a coffee shop in the Mission, where I stopped by one day to drop off some records. Marisela, Asthma's guitarist and singer was working there as well, and when she mentioned that she played in a sludgy hardcore band we started to talk about playing some shows together.

TSA has formed a kind of blood bond with this band over the last year and a half, so it seemed natural to get back on the road with them. We also had a road crew, Dariel and Gabby. Dariel is another San Francisco local head and dear friend since high school. Gabby moved here more recently from Los Angeles

and decided to quit her job at Whole Foods the day before we left so that she could leave California and see the northwest (this would be her first time going further north than Solano County).

Thursday, November 19, Eugene/Portland: Portland was the first destination. Our route was direct and purposeful. We planned just one stop on the way, where else but SeQuencial Biofuels in Eugene. In my excitement, the eleven-hour drive seemed to pass in mere minutes.

I can't back this place hard enough. Write it down: I-5, Oregon Exit 189. This time I smashed a bacon and egg sandwich on a biscuit. It was far better than the ignorant fast food breakfast I usually consume and even most of the bougie breakfast options available to us here in San Francisco. Also it was just about $3.50! I tried kombucha for the first time in my life here as well and found it a refreshingly tangy palate cleanser after a long day behind the wheel.

Portland is a strange city and we were all prepared to have a bad time. Punks in San Francisco and Oakland actually have at least one thing in common, which is fear of their respective cities turning into Portland, a wet and wretched tapestry of food trucks and craft beer bars.

I'd booked a bar show, at the Know. When booking this tour a bar gig seemed like an easy if not thrilling way to get started. I was real wrong: the gig was lit. The openers, Microagressor, played pretty capable punk pop, somewhere in Adverts territory. After our sets, Tensor stepped up and delivered some quality hardcore, delivering riffs that both shambled and slammed. It was a diverse pit: queer punks, bar punks, assorted random fools we hadn't seen in years who had somehow turned up in Portland.

At some point I guess the sound guy (who was also the door guy; very efficient style) texted his friends in Mongoloid—who were wrapping up their set down the way at Black Water Bar—and told them to jump on the bill. They did and the slam style at this gig became truly wild. This show was a demonstration of some of the best that Portland is capable of (though I'm sure the Cacophonie Nights gigs later that weekend raised the bar to absurd heights). We strolled out into the cold and lurid night with a sense of momentum.

Friday, November 20, Bellevue/Seattle/Tacoma: The next night brought us to Bellevue, a suburb across the water from Seattle. We played at a teen center. As we arrived, the place was teeming with teens; most of our travelling party went back to act sketchy by the vans (i.e. smoke cigs and slam some Little Caesars boneless chicken wings).

The center was well stocked, due to significant donations from Paul Allen I think. Much like Google, Facebook, Twitter or Salesforce here in the bay, it is very difficult to escape the shadow of the tech or aerospace industry in the Seattle area. In addition to huge Seattle Seahawks-branded lounge chairs there were setups for pool, foosball, skee-ball. None of these were set up with cues or balls this late. Playtime was over.

The first band to play was Newlywed. Watching this band set up was pretty captivating in its own right. They hauled in homemade speaker cabs, empty filing cabinets, sheets of metal, industrial-size springs, and of course a few contact mics. The band featured two percussionists turning old office wares into a Neubauten-esque rhythmic force as well as a guitarist eking out chiming and squealing leads and a bassist busting out some noisy, gut-twisting lines to hold things together. Truly a sound of their own. I don't know if anyone in this band is older than twenty. It was tight. There was also an even younger band, a Pentagram-worship group called Social Uth. A lot of deep grooves, occasional thrash breaks; the next generation of freaky weedy teenagers.

After Bellevue, a few of us split off from the Little Caesars crew to catch Gag doing their thing at their tour kickoff show in Seattle. The venue was appropriately called Office Space, a windowless room behind a storefront under the shadow of the Seattle skyline. We missed the first band, but made it in time to see Boise's Ingrown, as well as local crews Stand Up, Bricklayer and Gag. I won't be tedious: the room was packed. Slam styles were on point. I don't know if this is routine in the Northwest, but a hardcore show like this seems near impossible in the Bay Area right now, so it was really wild to stroll so casually into a gig like this.

After the Office Space function we listened to Beach House and had a chill night drive down to Tacoma, where we were staying at our friend Adam's house. We probably got there around 1:00 am. Our road crew had started a garbage fire in a barrel in the backyard and had started recording loud music in the living room (there was a drumset and a four-track set up there: a couple members of TSA and Asthma decided to a two-piece band on drums and bass).

It was very cold. I spent a while deciding if I wanted to try and sleep in the even-colder laundry room but eventually resolved to have a drink and spend loud night in the living room.

Saturday, November 21, Tacoma/Blaine: The next day we said goodbye to Gabby for the time being—she does not have a passport, so she wouldn't be able to come along to Vancouver. She ended up hanging out at Adam's house in Tacoma to work on her resume. We left our weed with her as well. At some point Adam's roommate showed her how to turn on the thermostat, and the house had a great VHS collection.

Her two days of exile were at least cozy. We knew we would have a less comfortable time crossing into Canada. We brought some nicer clothes with us so we could "pass" as normal people, but at the end of the day there was no hope of looking like anything other than a group of exhausted and delirious mutants. We were about to roll through in two minivans full of gear, dirty clothes and sleeping bags with eight people, only three of whom were white. Naturally we were pulled in for a few questions.

"Who set up this show for you?" / "How did you meet them?" / "Where are you playing?" / "I don't understand, is this a bar? Is it a club?" / "Whose house is it?" / "Does your friend live there?" You hear a lot about the kindness and hospitality of the Canadian people; there are no nice cops. He asked for the email of the person booking the show. Marisela and I started spelling it out for him, but then he explained that he wanted to *read* the emails. I was real stressed out at this point, but being a cautious and responsible grownass man, I had already deleted a lot of texts, deleted all our show fliers with the cover charge listed, and even checked my email correspondence with my Vancouver contact. I reluctantly handed my phone over. Just as soon as he slid into my DMs, I get a text. He saw the push notification and gave me a look over.

"Well, according to your friend here you've got some dope in the van," he says. "We're going to have to take your keys and search it, right?"

I turned around, baffled. Tickled, even. I looked at the sorry array of my friends, sitting back to back on the uncomfortable bench of the lobby and looking just as confused as me. *Are any of these fools dumb enough to text me while this border cop is holding my goddamn phone?* I take my phone back and immediately pull up my messages, roaming charges be damned:

"Tell the boys to ditch herb in wash
No lose car at border
Just saying
Love
Dad".

TO BE CONTINUED

ENDNOTES:

1) Coming up in Part II: The Great White North, rave resuscitation, the Black Lodge (not the venue), the cabins of Dunsmuir, and the riffs of Crazy Bugs, Nasti and Old Man.

2) Seriously though, shout out to the punks of the Olympic peninsula. This will become more apparent in Part II as we get into further into Vancouver and Seattle, but everywhere we went we would hear the same store: gentrification, skyrocketing rents, corrupt governments playing into the hands of developers. Still, we met people up there are finding ways to do killer and exciting things under circumstances just as trying as those we face in the Bay Area. Maybe this is a small sample size, but there are moments of cohesion and possibility that just are not happening this far south, yet.

3) Want to sell *MRR* at gigs? In your distro? Online? Anywhere? We'll get you five copies for $18.50 in the US. You don't even have to email me. Visit store.maximumrocknroll.com/products/mrr_wholesale and we'll get you linked up.

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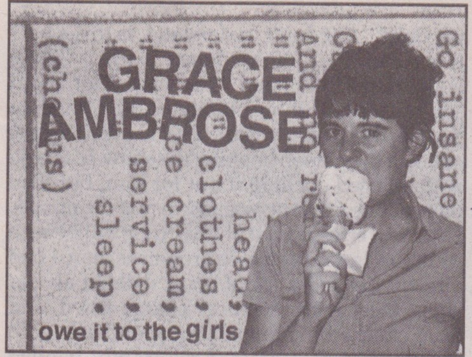

2015 was eventful and exhausting. I started playing guitar and made a band that people actually seem to like. I listened to more new punk records than ever before. I surprised my best friend in a different country and learned how to love the pogo again while there. I accidentally (and purposefully) sparked both productive and unproductive conflicts, found a job-job I love, and finally acquired the perfect leather jacket. In the year and change I've been here I've made seventeen issues of the magazine, over half of them alone. By the time you read this, a new coordinator will have moved in. I can't wait.

Doing this thing alone certainly takes a toll. This month Layla and Chris came over for print night and helped me finish up the issue. Turns out the harsh glow of the monitor is a little more palatable when there are people there to laugh along with you. I'm looking forward to some newfound free time when Brendan arrives (one can dream) but more to having a co-conspirator, hoping for the generative energy that comes with collaboration and inevitable conflict. We've got a special zines issue on the docket as one of our first projects together. It's mostly firmed up, but do you have ideas about what should be featured? Tell us!

I recently flipped through the 924 Gilman book that *MRR* helped release a decade or so ago. On one of the first pages is a letter from Tim Yo to the Gilman collective, from the very earliest days of the space. He talked about how too much of the work on the venue was falling on the shoulders of too few, how that structure wasn't radical, how in fact a division of labor that leads to burnout was a failure of their goals. He said if the distribution of labor couldn't change that perhaps the project should be abandoned. Based on that letter, I think Tim would see the set-up we have now at the magazine as a failure—not content-wise or ideologically, but structually. I'd be inclined to agree.

I'm not complaining about my job. Ultimately, it's still a dream listening to Wretched over breakfast and corresponding with dozens of punks every month. I have big plans for *MRR* in 2016 though, beyond the execution of a monthly magazine: finishing the records database project, relaunching the website, working on our long-awaited book. If we wamt to accomplish this I believe that we need to restructure somewhat in the new year, in order to make *MRR* more sustainable with every passing month. In my conceptualization of punk, the means have always mattered as much as the end product. I want this to be a more collective effort by shitworkers here in the Bay Area and beyond, not just because it will make my life easier, but because it will make for a better and more meaningful magazine. We need to spread out the labor and decentralize the control.

If you live here and have ever been interested in getting involved with this long-running experiment, now's a great time. There are records to be filed and green-taped, yes, but also interviews to be conducted, creative projects to be done (audio tour of the *MRR* house! Redecorating!), archives to dig through, merchandise to make. There are things that can be done here or at home. There are things that can be done in an hour and other projects that will take months. We usually have snacks and Eli's new job means that soon we'll probably always have beer. This is your open invitation to come on by. Write to me at grace@maximumrocknroll.com and we'll figure out how to slot you in. I want everyone's time here to feel meaningful and necessary—it's not all glamorous, but it will all be worth it.

All I want in 2016 is more cool girls starting bands, the death of the all-male hardcore show, destruction of punk social capital on punk social media, for *P*tchf*rk* dot com to never mention this magazine again, the adoption of a zero tolerance policy for fencewalkers, a personal copy of the Foams 7". Do whatever is within your power to make it all so. One love to no fucker.

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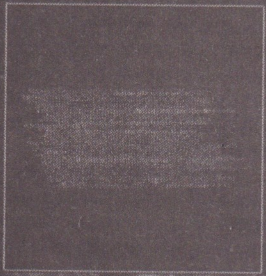

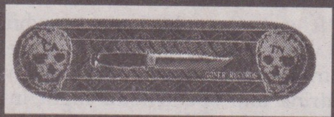

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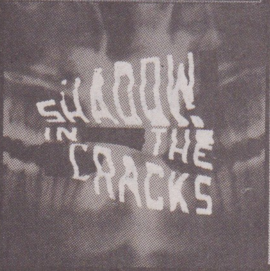

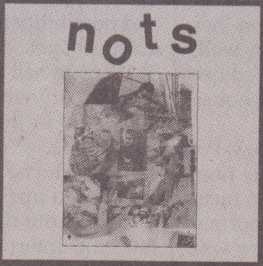

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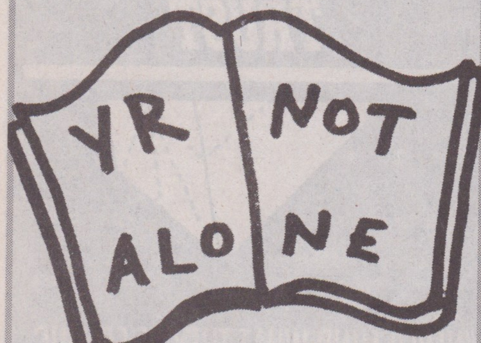

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BUSTED OUTLOOK

I cut my teeth on hardcore that, for lack of a less cliché way to put it, had something to say; with music that could back up the message—whether it be political, social, or personal—without being self-indulgent. Since then, I've seen far fewer bands put their all into their words, but Busted Outlook from the Bay Area make this part of their credo. Their sound lies somewhere between the early/mid 2000s Bay Area hardcore bands associated with 625 Records and the more recent Painkiller/New Scene bands. Combined with Rich's topical and well-articulated lyrics, Busted Outlook serves as a much-needed reminder that bands that play raging, straightforward hardcore with lyrics that have the power to connect and validate are still important and necessary. So far, they've put out the Plague Hoarder cassette, Spitting Wind EP, and a couple of unofficial tour/preview tapes. They also have an LP in the works for an upcoming European tour. Introduction and interview by Dan Goetz. Photos by Mikey Forty-Seven and Martin Sorrondeguy.

Busted Outlook is Rich on vocals, Jeremy on guitar, Fred on guitar, Eric on bass, and Taylor on drums.

MRR: First, talk a bit about how the band came together. Rich and Jeremy, wasn't it just you two on the demo?

Rich: The demo was me and Big Jerm USA...

Taylor: Big Jerm Master Killer...

Rich: Big Jerm Riff Merchant. Me and Jeremy played drums in all our bands before this, and it was an idea where we didn't want to do that, so I was like "you got some riffs, I got some lyrics, we'll record this demo, and if it sucks, we'll bury it and pretend we never did this [laughs], and if it's good, maybe we'll turn it into a band. So we practiced once, then we met up in San Jose and recorded the demo with Fred in the basement of our old house. House of the Dead Rat, RIP. We recorded four songs, and Fred laid down some divebombs...

Fred: As a joke at first...

Rich: But later when he was mixing, we were just like, "he's playing guitar," so we added Fred. Jeremy and I had already been talking about asking Taylor to play drums because he played in a few other bands that we were down with. I had been in bands with Eric before and I was like, "Yo, you should play bass, because you don't do shit," and that was that.

MRR: Has songwriting since then been more collaborative at all?

Jeremy: Everyone helps. This is a collective . *[group laughter]* Busted Outlook Collective 2016.

Rich: I think it's more collaborative. Jeremy has riffs because he doesn't do shit all day. We'll have a group message for the band, and he'll ask twenty questions, and no one will answer for like five hours because we're all at work. Like, "I've got six riffs, you gotta check this shit out!" But he'll bring the riffs to practice and start it, and we'll say, "We should pause here, we should continue on here." Jeremy has all the riffs, but they'd be dogshit without any of us. *[group laughter]*

Taylor: It goes through the collective's filter.

MRR: Rich, I always knew you have a lot to say, and was hoping that one day you'd step out from behind the drumset and front a band. I think I also read somewhere that you had recently started to write more in general. Did you see the band as a catalyst for that, or were there other reasons?

Rich: I used to write when I was a lot younger, and I hadn't for a really long time. I started up again when I was dealing with a lot of stuff I'm trying to unlearn personally. It's an important tool for me to work towards healing and unlearning, and it's helped me a lot. It's cool to have some weird poem written that's kind of personal, and I like to be able to emote it through hardcore. It wasn't a catalyst for my writing, I was already writing, but it's cool to be able to place sadness and other types of emotion in an aggressive manner. I am a true believer in using anger constructively, anger is important. Maya Angelou said: "You should be angry. You must not be bitter. Bitterness is like cancer. It eats upon the host. It doesn't do anything to the object of its displeasure. So use that anger. You write it. You paint it. You dance it. You march it. You do everything about it. You talk it. Never stop talking it."

MRR: Your lyrics take on topics that aren't easily summed up. There is in particular a theme of masculine vulnerability, which, except for in self-pitying contexts, I feel is quite rare in hardcore. You also talk about these songs live and have published a zine further articulating your lyrics. How has it felt putting yourself out there, and what have people's reactions been, both locally and on tour?

Rich: It's an experiment in vulnerability, because I haven't been too good at it. I was never taught to be that way. This is all stuff that's been coming out in the last five years of me working through things. People will come up to me and talk to me about how they found a parallel in a lyric or something I said, and that is really cool and means a lot, but I don't really know what the reaction is for most crowds. But I like the idea of putting content out there, like making these other options or pathways available regardless of if I know that people are listening. I'm definitely more of a listener, that's how I learned half this stuff, when bands talked at shows. When people say things in passing, especially when people don't think they're smart or worthy of being listened to, I'll let it soak in, and go home and think about it a lot, and if I didn't know what it was I'll research it.

Jeremy: I think people are pumped on good lyrics in hardcore, because the majority of them are dogshit. It's tight when people have something to say that actually carries weight, and isn't just some stupid shit. Drop the mic.

MRR: It's intelligent and acknowledges nuance, but isn't preachy or saying there's only one way to do things.
Taylor: It gives purpose to being angry. Not just being angry and acting out for no reason at all, but instead directing it at something with meaning and substance. Constructive anger.

MRR: Jeremy, I'm curious: given that you played in crusty circles for many years with your older bands, what exactly was it that brought you from there to playing in bands like Busted Outlook and Scalped, and starting your label Layin' Waste?
Rich: Yo, that's some dope weird connection shit, because Eric and I had bought that Blight record at Streetlight Records in San Jose when we were way young, and we were like, "This is some cool crust shit." It's weird that years later, Jeremy's like "I used to sing in this stupid band called Blight," and I was like, "Oh shit, I love that 7"!"
Jeremy: Human progression. I've progressed as a human, and I've got a lot of dumbass friends who are still doing the same exact shit that we were doing when we were teenagers. That's not me. I don't wanna do that. And I like music, all sorts of music. I like doing different shit. Music is my life. Put that in quotes. Think of how depressing it would be to still be doing the shit I was doing when I was fifteen years old at age thirty. No thanks!

MRR: How do you feel like you do or don't fit into the numerous punk scenes in the Bay Area, perhaps as a band whose members are split between San Jose and San Francisco?
Jeremy: Wrong question for the Bay Area.
Rich: Being from San Jose, it's different. We're part of the Bay Area, but they never really consider it part of the Bay Area. I'm not really bitter about it, because I don't expect anyone to come to San Jose, and it's not like I want hefty crowds from San Francisco and Oakland to always be in San Jose. It might just make it nasty, and I don't want that.
Eric: I went to Gilman on Friday, and it was the first sold out show I'd been to there in a huge amount of time. I thought it was gonna be like what it used to be when I was young, but it wasn't at all. There was a kid on a yellow Acura drinking Hennessey, listening to '90s Godsmack-type music and the security guards were honestly scared, standing across the street in the dark. After the show, everyone just poured out on the street. Nobody cared. Everything had changed. I don't know what fitting in is.
Taylor: That question is hard for me to answer, because the Bay Area itself is spread between a million different scenes, because it's so big. I don't really know whom we play to, if we necessarily play to a punk crowd or a hardcore crowd.
Rich: I would play any event. I don't feel like we only need to play one type of show. It's hard to do that in the Bay anyway because there are so many different scenes. And I feel like we're all connected to the other ones. I don't know how to answer that. Do we fit? Do we not fit? I mean we wear fitteds and wear nicer clothes, but I fuck with a lot of other scenes in and out of punk. Contextually and aesthetically punk looks way different in San Jose. Punks aren't as "visibly punk." You see a fool in baggy jeans and a Pendelton, but he probably rocks Lagwagon or Eyehategod or maybe even Jawbreaker. I'm not helping this question am I?
Fred: That's something that I've never cared enough about to think of.
Jeremy: I think that the Bay Area is more clique-y in terms of people and their political beliefs, and not so much in music. Tons of different genres of bands play together all the time, and that's not the case a lot of other places. And here, people are more together about their politics and less about music. Like, they don't care what the fuck they play or listen to; it's what you think.
Rich: I guess that's something I do appreciate about the Bay.
Taylor: I feel that the style of hardcore we play isn't really known for political lyrics. And like Jeremy said, people here are more inclined to play with bands that have similar politics or lyrical content. Which opens us up to play with bands that don't sound like us at all. And at the same time we can play with bands whose lyrics don't extend further than scene politics or anything remotely political. I honestly don't really think about where we fit in. We play music for us, not for other people.
Rich: Tater Tot [Taylor] nailed it.

MRR: Has Robert Collins said anything about you naming a song after his knee brace?
Rich: Haha, you know, he hasn't. He knows, he definitely has the demo. I don't think he even gives a shit, and I wasn't writing it for him to be like, "Hey Robert, check this out," it was just funny and he's an inspiring dude. It wasn't so much about his knee brace as it was his devotion to hardcore.
Jeremy: He's never said anything about it to me either.

MRR: How was the west coast tour with Hounds of Hate?
Rich: It was four days, it was fun.
Jeremy: It was ten days!
Rich: Oh fuck was it ten days? Damn, where was I?
Jeremy: Three of the shows were in the Bay, and one was in Merced and one was in Davis.
Rich: Damn, I don't fuckin' remember shit. I thought it was cool. It was fun.
Jeremy: Hounds of Hate are fuckin' great.
Taylor: Hounds of Hate killed it every single night, they were so good, and awesome people on top of that. But what I was blown away by was how clean and handsome they all looked still by the end of their full US tour. They seriously looked like they just woke up on their day off. Four days passed, all of us, the Collective, looked like a giant pile of shit.
Rich: I wish we'd gotten to drive in the same van, it would've been cooler to bond in the van rather than just at the shows or when we'd eat food, but it was sick. I appreciate their calmness, its wild!

Also, they are really sweet in general.
Jeremy: Shout out to Odd Man Out. They were sick.
Taylor: Odd Man Out rules. We also played with Bricklayer. Shout out to Bricklayer, they are also sick.

MRR: Talk a bit about the promo you just recorded, and the upcoming record, if you want to let the cat out of the bag.
Rich: We just put out a promo tape for an upcoming LP that is gonna come out on Refuse Records out of Berlin. We're going to release it in the US, but we haven't figured out who's gonna put it out yet. But we just recorded a promo, because Taylor and Jeremy play in a bunch of other bands and they were on tour most of this year, and the band wasn't doing that much for five or six months, so we just wanted to put something out to show we're still writing, and mostly as a refresher to ourselves to record the songs we've been writing.
Jeremy: What's up? Also, we're playing Damaged City Fest. We're on the East Coast April 5th through

10th or so.
Rich: The cat is out!
Jeremy: Also the Still Not Quiet on the Western Front fest, when's that?

MRR: February 10th-14th.
Jeremy: And a European trip in July, three weeks long, for the release of the new record. Untitled so far.
Taylor: Unrecorded so far.

MRR: Rich, what's the best gymnastics feat you've pulled off live?
Jeremy: Rich has jumped over Taylor.
Taylor: Multiple times
Jeremy: That's pretty fucking cool.
Taylor: At our Merced show, which in my opinion one of the sickest shows we played—shout out to Damien at Tigers and Daggers Records—Rich scaled a wall, *American Gladiators* style, jumped off of it, over me, and landed. I'm still here, surviving and breathing. And there was a giant American flag on the wall, so it was more like *American Gladiators* than it possibly could have been. One day Rich isn't going to make it. I hope someone films it so we can send it into *America's Funniest Home Videos.*
Rich: The thing that's weird is that I feel like it's so kitschy now. I feel like I got really hyper because I was just behind the drums, but now I don't know what to do with myself, so I'll just move around really weirdly. But now I jump over something like every show, and I don't want them to think it's expected. I have nothing else to do. Like, every breakdown where's there's thirty seconds and no lyrics I just stand there, I don't know how to two-step, but I think jumping over Taylor is the best thing. I try and do yoga poses as well, that's fun.
Taylor: At the first show I remember seeing Rich do a front-flip and my first thought was: "Damn, that sucks for him, he's gotta do that every show now."

MRR: Would you like people who come see you to bring things for you to jump over?
Rich: Yeah, I'll do that. I'll jump over whatever!
Taylor: Hurdles, things on fire, bring a jump ramp, trampoline,
Rich: When I was in high school, I saw Slipknot and System Of A Down in concert. My friend John Edge's mom got us free tickets because she was like "you guys are into rock shit, right?" So we went, and there was a fire pit, which I think should be involved in most hardcore shows. Someone who is probably drunk would take their shirt off, light it on fire, and throw it in the center, and then people would mosh around it. That would be so sick. I'll jump over that. I'll throw Taylor in that.
Taylor: Let's do that at 1-2-3-4 Go!

MRR: Just light a stack of dollar bin records on fire. Another lyrical theme I see on the EP is in the song "Rings in the Limb," which takes on those who shame others for their substance abuse. How we all have destructive habits, and if we're lucky they won't kill us.

Rich: Yeah, I spent a lot of time growing up watching women in my life have their reactions downplayed and ideas discounted because of mental illness or drug addiction. It's that type of bullshit that pushed a lot of them further down a hole. I watched men in my life damage themselves and the people around them, afraid of themselves. Black and brown men aren't often taught softness, not to excuse their actions. We are stuck in a larger system of oppression teaching us early on we are only bad. Duality is something often hidden away from Black and brown men.

Stigmas about mental health issues and drug addiction are so prevalent in the world, not just the little piece we have in the punk community. It was sad to see family members have to go to jail in order to receive support for mental health or drugs. I often think of choices I've made and I think of all the destructive habits I have. I would never judge the ways in which people choose to cope. Like the song says, "living is hard, but coping is harder." I hate to think of how much those stigmas hurt us. There is a collective jail cell or gravestone with our name on it if we don't start breaking some fucked up cycles homey.

"Peeling" points out that people have the capacity to be both abuser and abused, while still putting the responsibility on the individual to unlearn learned behavior. This was something that was hard for me to understand at first, but we all have the capacity to be both. More often than not, survivors become abusers, it's a cycle that is very blatant and you see it with the prison industrial complex. As a survivor I know that I have had and still have the capacity to be a trespasser. I know that the shitty actions of people are left for *everyone* to clean up and that is unfortunate. I went to a teach-in on transformative justice and community accountability. That gave me a lot of strength in trusting my own boundaries as a survivor of types of abuse and in reaffirming that I am in charge of what I'm comfortable with dealing with. I am not alone in being aware that as survivor of abuse I also have the capacity to perpetuate these cycles. I am aware enough to acknowledge that in my own healing. I can give space to people who have abused and don't know that they have the option to heal and to possibly no longer perpetuate the violence that surrounds them. I think a lot of young boys I know feel that they are just *bad* and have no options. It was cool to learn some tactics on how to present options to these people who are often left without many due to these cycles of violence.

It was also important for me to know some of the differences between restorative justice and transformative justice. Transformative justice is more impactful and focused on individuals as separate healing entities. I identified with this because I have put in a lot of work towards healing some wounds. In my experience as a survivor, "forgiveness" (I use that loosely) can happen without the abuser or trespasser being present or involved. That is up to me, not a committee or court systems. With restorative justice you need both parties involved, which doesn't always work. That has a lot of outside pressures and sometimes just seems like an abuser is apologizing with the survivor feeling pressured to go along. It's also something that has been coopted by courts, which seems to get messy. They are trying to start a transformative justice group here in the South Bay, which is great because a lot of these processes are specific to our communities. I'm happy to have more conversations and release stigmas surrounding speaking about forms of abuse. It was amazing to see older Black and brown folks and younger Black and brown folks around in a room talking about supporting each other in a real vulnerable place. It's hard, I know. Transformative justice is such a touchy subject, but it freaks me out more when people discount my option to try and heal or want to give people space as a survivor, like I don't know what's best or safe for me. It doesn't mean I don't care. Accountability isn't a one size fits all. It is a really scary place to be, the person who feels for both parties. I think maybe I am much too aware of these cycles? I also found it real inspiring to have such a large focus of it be on documenting, because it is how we learn and teach others. I am big fan of that, always have been.

MRR: I definitely remember the personal importance of lyric sheets and poring over band's words when I was getting into hardcore, and yeah, now they're basically afterthoughts at best.

Rich: I really appreciate bands that put work into their lyrics; it's so much more personal. Don't be afraid to ask for lyrics, you might be surprised.

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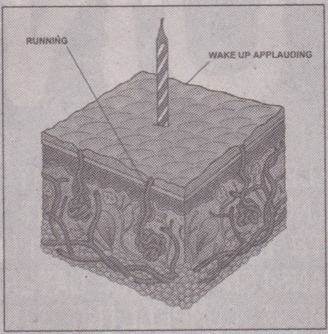

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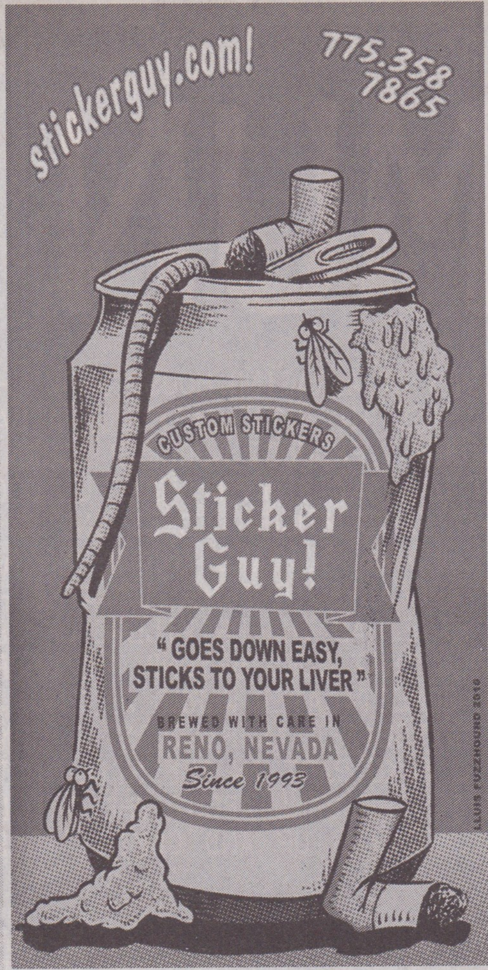

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COMMUNION

I FIRST MET COMMUNION OF THIEVES AT A RAGING HOUSE SHOW THEY HELPED SET UP FOR MY BAND WHEN WE PASSED THROUGH IN EL PASO IN 2011, ALTHOUGH A LAST-MINUTE INJURY MEANT THAT FRANK AND MARC'S DEATH METAL/CRUST PROJECT NUCLEAR SCORN HAD TO PLAY IN THEIR PLACE. WHEN I FINALLY CAUGHT THEM AT OAKLAND'S MOST SHAMEFUL OOGLE MANSION A YEAR LATER, IT WAS AN ABSOLUTELY TRANSCENDENT EXPERIENCE. LED BY ONE OF THE MOST COMPELLING SINGERS IN CONTEMPORARY METALPUNK, POUNDING GUITARS AND DRUMS HERALD THE ARRIVAL OF FIERCE DESERT ENERGY, THE INTENSELY APOCALYPTIC SENSE OF ATMOSPHERE MATCHED BY PULVERIZING SPEED AND FINESSE. THOSE WHO HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF SEEING THEM PERFORM KNOW THAT THERE IS A POWER IN THESE SONGS THAT GOES BEYOND THE CHORDS AND BLAST BEATS, BORN OF AN INDIGNANT DISGUST WITH THE DOMESTICATED WORLD WE FIND OURSELVES TRAPPED WITHIN AND A REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE LIES DISGUISED AS HISTORY BY CONQUERORS AND PRIESTS. BEFORE THEY RETURN TO THE BAY AREA TO TAKE PART IN THE STILL NOT QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT FEST, I GOT A CHANCE TO TALK TO THE BAND ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THEIR WORDS AND MUSIC AS WELL AS THEIR EXPERIENCES GROWING UP AND COMING TOGETHER IN THE BORDERLANDS OF WEST TEXAS.

MRR: FIRST THINGS FIRST: WHO IS IN THE BAND, WHO PLAYS WHAT, AND SO ON?

LUIS: Communion of Thieves currently is: Frank Keeko, drums; Aaron Martinez, guitar; Alison Segura, vocals; Luis Santiago, guitar; Andy Segura, bass. The original lineup had Marc Zafiro playing bass, with our homies Freddy Barraza and Lalo Gurrola filling in on a couple tours throughout the years.

MRR: COULD YOU GO INTO SOME DETAIL ABOUT THE ORIGIN AND MEANING OF THE BAND'S NAME?

LUIS: Communion of Thieves represents those of us who aren't welcome everywhere. The ones labeled "thugs" by strangers.

ALISON: The name Communion of Thieves came from a night out. We had been invited to a "cholo"-themed party around the University area downtown, so we decided to go and have some beers. We were there for maybe an hour before a white female dressed like a chola came up to us and said we were being kicked out because they were afraid that we were going to steal something. Of course, this was hilarious because we were at a party surrounded by trust fund kids glorifying Hispanic gangster culture. None of us had stolen anything nor were we planning to. We weren't offended because of the irony of the situation, but we did joke about it on the drive home saying things like, "we're a gang of thieves, lock your doors and hide your Chanel bags, we're the Communion of Thieves!" We all laughed about naming our band Communion of Thieves, but then we all agreed on keeping that name to always remind us of what society views us as. We certainly are not and will never be the scum that most will be quick to judge us as.

MRR: HOW HAVE YOUR ROOTS IN EL PASO SHAPED THE BAND AND ITS MUSIC? THE US-MEXICAN BORDER HAS HAD A CENTRAL PLACE IN YOUR LYRICS THROUGHOUT THE BAND'S EXISTENCE. COULD YOU DESCRIBE SOME OF THE IMPACT THAT GROWING UP AND FORMING WITHIN A BORDER CITY HAS HAD ON YOU ALL?

FRANK: Living on the border, crossing the border to visit family that can't afford a visa to come over to El Paso, that entire ordeal of there being a border in general, seeing the corruption within El Paso and Juarez: all of this influences our music and our roots as people.

ALISON: Growing up in a border town definitely influenced our music and our message. Growing up, my grandmother would take me on church missions to pass out clothes and candy to the children of Anapra (one of the poorest areas in Ciudad Juárez) and to various psychiatric wards. Seeing this as a child, I learned to never question why I didn't have name-brand clothes and shoes or why my family would collect food from the food banks. I was taught to be grateful for what we had and to give to others, even if it left me with nothing. Seeing that poverty wouldn't improve as I grew older created a rage inside of me, a particular rage against the government who get richer as the poor get poorer. Juárez is a part of me. My songs in protest of cartel and government are not songs for me or for you, they are for the many who lived through and died from organized crime and violence. Those songs are for the children who witnessed their parents get killed in front of them and now have to live in orphanages. The songs we wrote during the drug war were the only way we could connect with those across the border; the only way we could express our lament and anger for them. This planet is fucked, and our border town is only a fragment of the horrors that humanity has caused and is continuing to destroy.

LUIS: Before Communion I played guitar in this band from Ciudad Juárez, National Disasters, during the worst years of

OF THIEVES

INTERVIEW AND INTRO BY
WILL BLOMQUIST

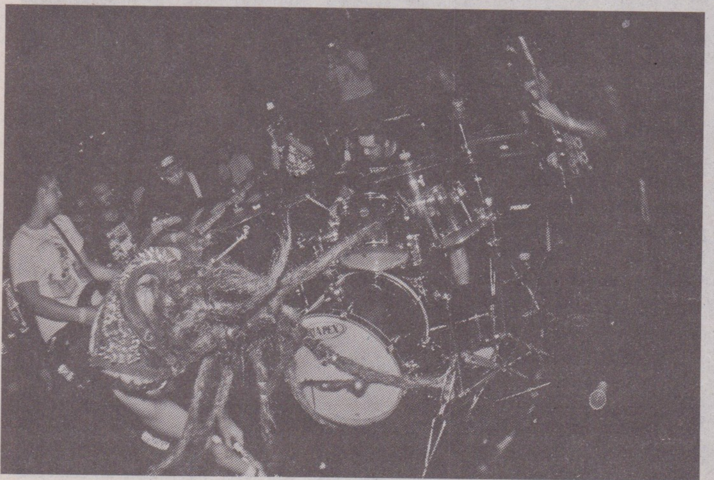
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY
STEPHANIE CATBUTT
CLIVE WALKER
MATTHEW GRANT ANSON
SAUL TORRES

the violent drug war in the mid-2000s. There was crazy shit going on there in those days. It was normal to pass a grisly scene of shot-up police units and dead cops on the ground. At one point, people in Mexico couldn't even have a funeral because gunmen would show up to those as well, so they started having them in El Paso. I'll never forget, there were so many people dying that I would drive past a funeral procession like five times per week on my way to work or school. Once this huge military truck pulled us over, and they searched our phones for texts or photos of drugs. It was so fucked. That was the first time I had an automatic rifle pointed at my head. The Feds would knock on houses and businesses and ask, how much does the household make? What items of value does the family own? They would make lists of information on whole communities and then use intimidation to force "protection money" from families. Sometimes I'd see those fuckers walking up the neighborhoods going door to door. Other people have similar stories. Around here that shit is just part of growing up I guess, but I've never been able to get used to it. Those experiences have always stayed with me, though, and I think I will always talk about them in any project that I am involved with, especially Communion of Thieves.

MRR: HOW DID THE BAND COME TOGETHER ORIGINALLY? GOING EVEN FURTHER BACK, WHAT DREW YOU GUYS TO PUNK AND METAL IN THE FIRST PLACE?

FRANK: I got into punk when I was fourteen years old, began going to shows when I was fifteen, and I liked the drums so I started playing in punk bands with Marc, the original bassist of C.O.T.

LUIS: Frank, Marcus, Aaron, and myself have pretty much always known each other through punk. We easily go back ten-plus years, Frank and Marc being childhood homies. They were in this PV band Pinhead Nation, and I played in this really shitty grindcore band, Danny Trejo. We used to always play house shows for each other back in like 2006, and we had run into each other even before that. In 2010, Aaron, Frank, and myself had disbanded an anarcho-punk band we played in for a couple years, DeadFuck, wanting to start another band. Our first practice we called Marcus over to my place to jam on the bass. Alison was already there, just kickin' it with Frank. She would grab the mic and scream into it; we liked the result, and just ended up becoming the band. Our influences at the time were more geared towards the



D-Beat and neo-crust sounds. The first shit is real punky, with melodic leanings. Later on we added more thrash and black metal influences. I've noticed that it's cool for top shelf punx to hate on black metal recently, but whatever. I personally love the folklore element in black metal, and in Communion the drumming and guitar style has really helped us to express those ancient ancestral vibes.

ALISON: Marc, Aaron and Luis had all been in other bands before, but this was my first time attempting vocals. Screaming naturally came out and the words *lo que es la vejez*—"what it is to be old"—were the first words I ever sang into a mic. We all had a punk background, having met at local punk shows. I met Luis first, through my good friends. I had the hots for Frankie, so once we started dating we all decided to give this crust stuff a shot. My love for rebellious punk and evil thrash metal came from having grown up in a very strict Protestant home. I was never really allowed to listen to music that wasn't religious and never really allowed to go out with my friends. Through MySpace I began listening to different bands like A Global Threat, Crucifix, and Conflict, and through this music I was able to express my frustration and headbang in my bedroom with my headphones on. Slowly but surely I began going to shows once my cousin Andy and Alex opened up No Man's Land in the Lower Valley neighborhood.

AARON: I grew up around hardcore punk. Four chords and distortion almost felt natural to me. First band ever was with my younger brother, [called] Distrust. Luis actually recorded our first tracks.

MRR: SINCE THE FIRST DEMO, THE BAND HAS HAD A VERY HONED-IN STYLE, MUSICALLY AS WELL AS CONCEPTUALLY. WERE THESE PLANNED FROM BEGINNING, OR DID THEY EVOLVE OVER YOUR TIME TOGETHER?

ALISON: We were sure of what genre of music we were aiming for: melodic, with D-Beat and anguished breakdowns. Everything evolved pretty quickly. For our first "show" we played in Luis' bedroom at his mom's house for around six people. It was 4/20 and we set up the projector to be playing along to our music. It was more of a trippy thing to do at the moment but it stuck and we continued to project images of police brutality and war during our sets.

FRANK: We tried to make [the songs] as unique and brutal as possible.

MRR: WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR MAJOR INFLUENCES, MUSICALLY OR OTHERWISE?

ALISON: As people I would say that two major influences on our lives have been the punk culture and existentialist points of view. We reject destiny and live life day-by-day, expecting the worst but hoping for the best. Most of us came from single-parent homes, watching them struggle to survive in this world. Because of this we know that we don't deserve most of what we have and we stay humble, treating people the way we want to be treated.

AARON: As far as music, when we first started this band I was listening to a lot of Fall of Efrafa, Antimaster, His Hero is Gone. Now, I listen to a lot more black metal. Outside of music, I guess the need to explore the cities

around us, not staying stuck in one corner of the world.
FRANK: PUNK.

MRR: WHAT DOES THE TYPICAL SONGWRITING PROCESS LOOK LIKE FOR YOU GUYS? WHO WRITES THE LYRICS? IS THAT MORE OF A GROUP EFFORT?

LUIS: Some lyrics were written together between Alison and myself. Marcus and Alison co-wrote "Black Earth". Others are all her own creation. Everyone puts in equally when it comes to the music. One person might come through with a basic pattern, and we add to it from there. We've always tried to write about shit that is close to home with us. The lyrical content hits on the duality of life, the negative and positive things about existence. From the negative vibes of life (like growing up with no options, leaving home to work in a foreign land, the risks of participating in organized crime, the inner corruption which exists in every human being) to positive vibes (like our connection to nature, memories of our elders, self-determination, and reverence for our history and our heritage).

ALISON: The writing process usually consists of one of the guitarists presenting a riff that they all can then build on. Within the first couple of seconds of hearing a riff I connect with my inner emotion at the time and begin to write lyrics for the song. My lyrics are usually written in a folklore style, where a story can be told and I try to leave the ending open-ended, encouraging the listener to decide what comes next for them personally regarding certain topics and life situations. Some lyrics are more personal and are about things that I or my friends and family have gone through, such as chronic depression, ADHD, suicide, drug abuse, and mental disabilities. I choose to write most of our lyrics in Spanish because it is the language of my culture and I never want to forget how to write or speak it.

Being a bilingual band was more of my idea, being that the first words I screamed into a mic were in Spanish. Spanish lyrics always come more naturally to me and the beauty of the language has been forgotten by most of the people in my age group. Spanish to me is sacred and part of my culture, my intention was always to write songs that I would be able to repeat to my children, stories of my youth in the language of my people.

MRR: WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUNKS TODAY IN THE EL PASO SCENE AND THOSE LIVING IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ? DO YOU GUYS EVER PLAY THERE, AND DO BANDS OFTEN COME ACROSS FROM MEXICO?

ALISON: Before the major drug war in Juárez, we had bands like Después de Muerto and others come play shows in El Paso. There had been a couple of punk fests in Juárez with participation from bands from both sides of the border. When shit hit the fan, many of the band members from Juárez fled the city and many of the music venues over there burnt down or were permanently closed. Recently we had played a Halloween show at a bar called Hysteria; we took a lot of El Paso local bands and had a mini-fest over there. Now we are trying to get in contact with different venues to be able to have music festivals over there, including for touring bands. We're working really hard to make this happen and we hope to announce an El Paso/Juárez fest in the near future. A lot of El Paso and Juárez ska bands continue to throw shows in Juárez since there is a venue dedicated to ska over there.

LUIS: American bands used to tour Juárez, and shows there were awesome. After the drug war though, that significantly decreased. Now they only have like two ska bands that play every weekend. We've tried setting shit up over there, we have played there before, but it's very difficult to get shit going. It's not as vibrant as Tijuana, for example. In El Paso, you'll see a street punk girl hanging out with a pop punk kid and a thrasher dude. Since we're not as saturated with shows and music as the coast is, and we're a small community, we're not as cliquey as most places out there are.

MRR: I KNOW THAT YOU GUYS ARE QUITE ACTIVE IN BOOKING AND PROMOTING DIY SHOWS IN EL PASO. ARE THERE OTHER PROJECTS YOU GUYS ARE INVOLVED WITH LOCALLY?

FRANK: I play drums for Glob, a grindcore band in El Paso with Freddy Barraza who played bass for us in Albuquerque one night, haha.

ANDY: I play drums in an instrumental post-rock band called Collisions. Aaron used to play guitar in it as well, and it was an outlet for him to get out his ambient side that he couldn't get out in Communion.

MRR: YOU GUYS HAVE TOURED THE SOUTHWEST PRETTY EXTENSIVELY. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST MEMORABLE TIMES YOU HAVE HAD ON THE ROAD? ANY NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

ALISON: My most memorable shows on tour were when we did a tour with Terrorist. "In Thrash We Crust" was our tour name [laughs]. We went from Phoenix all the way up to Arcata, Portland, Washington, Utah and back down through Denver. My favorite show was our show in Spokane, Washington. Our friend Ralph from WarKrusher had set up the show at a punk house. I believe it was the Berlin House, named after the dog that reigned over the home. This was my favorite show because we showed up to a house full of crusties, wild and free punks. When we played the living room turned into a tornado and they even crowdsurfed a dude on a wheelchair. We ended up getting paid $20 but didn't give a shit because we had just experienced one of the livest crowds, and even got to see a free "wrastling" match. By far one of my favorite shows. We almost died a couple of times on the road because Alien, the guitarist of Terrorist, was driving like a madman.

LUIS: When it comes to playing different cities and which cities are the wildest, I gotta give it to Phoenix, AZ. Those grinders out there go fuckin *hard*. Some of the craziest shows I've ever played were in Phoenix. We played with Pizza Hi-Five and Versklaven in 2013 and people were straight up throwing metal chairs everywhere. Flagstaff, AZ comes in second. When we played in Flagstaff we played at the Swamp Wolf house. That show was so packed and so rowdy, they crowdsurfed Alison in mid-song. I remember them dropping her, and seeing her left cheek slam into the cymbal. Definitely one of the wildest shows ever. Spokane, WA was also a fuckin' riot. We played at this crib where all these runaways and train hoppers were living. It was like that movie *Gummo*, but a punk show. There was this 60-year-old skinhead on acid who would tap me on the shoulder and say, "Play an Oi! Song for an old skin!"

AARON: Desert Destroyer in Phoenix, by far one of the best fests ever. I spent a lot of time feeling out of this world and partying with Jesse Pinkman. Oakland, Phoenix, Santa Cruz, Tijuana, all these cities have thrown ragers for us.

MRR: WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE BANDS FROM EL

PASO, LAS CRUCES, AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS?
FRANK: Angrist, Tantos Muertos, Raul Palomo (rest in PEACE), Resin Cum, Oryx, and older bands Losers and Pura Miseria.
ALISON: My favorite bands from El Paso include Tantos Muertos, Angrist, Terror Inc., Nalgadas, Resin Cum and Leptictidium. Oryx and Pris from Las Cruces and Después de Muerto from Chihuahua (R.I.P). Hanta and Laughing Dog from Albuquerque rip also!
ANDY: We have a lot of friends in the scene and I'm sorry for whomever I missed, but some of my favorite locals are Dubois, Miijas, Oryx, and Resin Cum. Some old bands I miss are Buckeye and NYA. Communion of Thieves used to be my favorite local and I got the chance to start playing with them back in March, so that's awesome.

MRR: WHAT LIES IN THE FUTURE? DO YOU GUYS HAVE ANY BIG PLANS FOR 2016?.
ALISON: In 2016 we plan to release a new album and tour as much as we can. Hoping to finally make it to the East Coast also.
LUIS: We're stoked to play Desert Destroyer Fest with our Phoenix fam out there, and of course Still Not Quiet on the Western Front with you all! We've been wanting to release our first 12", been working on writing and recording it for over a year and a half. Hopefully we can finally see some results next year.

MRR: ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT THE PEOPLE READING THIS TO HEAR? ANY BANDS OR FRIENDS YOU GUYS WANT TO SHOUT OUT?
LUIS: Just a simple shout out to anyone who gives a shit about what we're doing, everyone who's supported us along the way: Unholy Anarchy Records, The Lovesprout, *MRR*, Deadfest, Desert Destroyer, our familia, our crews, Southwest/West Coast fams and communities, you know who you are.
AARON: My brother Mark, we spent a shit load of time learning our instruments. Void's mom for putting up with our loud-ass music. "Sloth" and the rest of Collisions. Lowrider Oldies. Hip Hop and Graffiti and *bong rips*!
ALISON: We have been a band for a while now, and we know the struggle to get your music heard and be able to afford touring and what not, but as long as we continue to be friends and have each other's best interest in mind I believe we will be jamming for many more years to come. I love my brothers and thank them eternally for asking me to try some vocals five years ago. I don't know who or where I would be if it wasn't for COT. This band, the people we have encountered and the memories we have built have saved my life. A personal shout out to anyone out there struggling with depression and/or drug abuse, "*Todo en esta vida tiene solución, menos la muerte*."
FRANK: Samuel Alonso from the mighty Lovesprout in EPTX, Frank from the Sandbox, and anyone that has supported us over the years, let us crash at their pad, and booked shows for us, thank you and goodnight.

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SEI TÖSHI

Sei To Shi (生と死 in Japanese) is a band from New York City that was active from approximately 2010–2011. They released a CD during that time but are finally being released on vinyl by my label Nightrider Records. It's an honor to be able to release their record for many reasons. I've looked up to them as members of the punk community for years, from Luis singing in En La Olla and knowing John from the CBGB's and ABC No Rio scenes back in the day. They are one of those good bands that never got enough recognition when they were active. Their legacy deserves to be on vinyl. Their singer is flying in from Kyushu, Japan to do several reunion shows in January 2016 in Brooklyn and Philadelphia to celebrate the release of their EP. Sei To Shi never toured while they were active and hence, they not known very well outside of the New York punk scene. This interview is mostly done with the guitarist and bassist, John and Luis, and the singer, Atsushi. Verde, their drummer, was not available for this interview.

Interview and introduction by Amelia Eakins.

MRR: How did you all wind up in New York City?
Luis: I am originally from Mexico City, I decided to immigrate to the United States in the early 2000s because going to school or finding a job was very difficult in Mexico, plus the salaries were (and still are) very low. I was looking for something new in my life [so] I made the decision to move to here.
John: I moved when I was seventeen from Colombia seeking more chaos and fun.

MRR: How did you get into punk?
Atsushi: When I was a teenager, my friend gave me a Sex Pistols cassette tape.
Luis: One of my best friends from my neighborhood introduced me to El Chopo (a punk flea market in Mexico City). I was fascinated to see so many punks, metal heads, and rockers hanging out there. You could watch people coming and going all day long.
I used to go there frequently to buy tapes because I wanted to know more about punk rock bands. I made new friends there and I knew punk was something important to me.
John: It all evolved from rock'n'roll to new wave to punk and hardcore. I believe it started when I was sixteen in 1988 and had a private tutor at school. Whenever I met her kids they would play bands like Siniestro Total, Toreros Muertos and Los Prisioneros. And I thought it was a fun sound with unthinkable lyrics for a kid. Then years later the movie *Rodrigo D: No Futuro* came out and after that my life changed. The soundtrack was pure reality of the violence that it was happening with lots of raw hardcore punk and metal which talked about the injustice of society at the moment with topics such as narco-terrorism, hate, violence in the streets and lots of crazy images of the no future lifestyle of the youth at that moment.

MRR: What was your first punk show?
Luis: Local punk bands playing on the streets of Iztapalapa.
John: I believe local bands from the late '80s and early '90s: IRA, GP, KDH, Desadaptadoz, and Fertil Miseria.
Atsushi: In 1991 I went to see Sham 69 in Fukuoka Prefecture Kyushu in Japan. It was my first punk show. There weren't any other bands playing with them. I was a high school student and it's my first time seeing punks directly.

MRR: What was it like coming into America?
Luis: Very tough, but there are always people that gives you a hand. I didn't cross the borderline, the borderline crossed me. I am a citizen of the universe I guess.

MRR: What were the differences you noticed between the punk scenes back home and here in the US?
John: Less real attitude and more posers. People didn't last too long. They change scenes like changing clothes so that makes it harder to believe in them. But I gotta say that the true ones are still good friends.
Luis: Shows and venues were a lot of smaller and there weren't many DIY spaces. You needed to show an ID to get in the shows. Just a lot of different rules that little by little you get used to.
Atsushi: The biggest differences between American bands and Japanese bands was that it's normal for American bands to play twice a night.

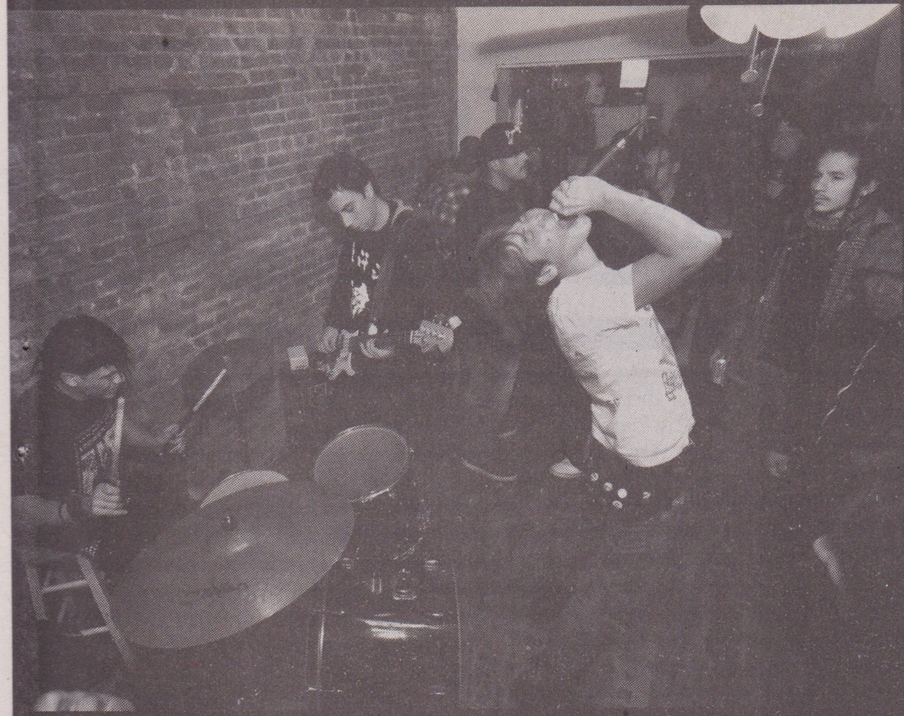
MRR: Johnny, I'm glad we're still friends! How did you find a home in punk in New York? What year did you come to NYC?
John: I moved in '99 but I came through the '80s and '90s and I always thought I was going to move here just because NYC is a real cool place to be around. It becomes almost like a drug that you can't quite *[laughs]* regardless of the changes like gentrification, hipsters and all that shit. NYC still has a hardcore essence.
Luis: Going to shows at ABC No Rio or CBGB's, making friends and being part of the scene. Early 2000s.

MRR: ABC No Rio was my first punk home and has created a community for so many people. I am so grateful ABC No Rio still exists. So, what was NYC like when you first came?
Luis: It had opportunities and it was more affordable to live. After 9/11 everything started to change little by little.
Atsushi: Big city. So many different racial people, very interesting for me!
John: Like Disneyland for a punk: dirty, darker, lots of punk shows, lots of places to go, lots of squats, great bands, ABC No Rio in the basement all you can drink, CBGB's, C-Squat, Wetlands, Barmacy, Mona's, Sweetwater, abandoned buildings here and there, punk picnics, hookers, thieves, drinking in the street, junkies and a crazy scene of '80s, punks, skinheads and hardcore dudes...hear nothing, see nothing, say nothing!

MRR: Who still lives in NYC? What is it like now?
Luis: I'm still in New York and it is very difficult with fewer opportunities for sure. Housing is expensive nowadays because all the people that used to live in the city are moving to areas like Brooklyn and now you can see how prices went up. Gentrification is out of control and forcing poor families to move out of state. Many neighborhoods have changed completely.
John: But Luis, Verde and myself are still here.

MRR: Atsushi, when did you move back to Japan? Why?
Atsushi: I was a student in NYC. I just had a student visa. So I had to move back to Japan. Now I'm living in Kyushu in Japan. There are still many great bands here! In the '80s, so many great noisy punk bands were here in Kyushu like Gai, Swankys, and Confuse. I haven't seen their show unfortunately, but if you like Confuse, I highly recommend you a band called Control. They're the one of my favorite bands in Kyushu recently.

MRR: What bands have you been in since Sei To Shi? What are you currently doing?
Atsushi: I'm playing drums in the band called tv.orphans.
Luis: I play Guitar for Dischaka. I have a job and I write for a fanzine called *El Zine* from Tokyo, Japan.
John: I created a project with friends, but just for fun,



called Repar-Chaos and is just covers of hardcore punk from the '80s in Colombia.

MRR: What bands were you in before?

Luis: En La Olla in the early 2000s. I was the singer.

John: Then when I moved here I played in En La Olla (or E.L.O.), then Absurd System and Sei To Shi. My first band back home when I was thirteen was called O'Dios, then I played in Ex-Kombro, BSN and Inanición.

MRR: I loved En La Olla. I still have my mini-CD and the split 7" that was released with Czolgosz! It was also an honor to book En La Olla at ABC No Rio, one of the first bands I ever booked. That's why I was so excited about Sei to Shi. How did Sei To Shi start?

John: Luis contacted me since we played together in E.L.O before, he was looking for a guitar player, then he contacted the rest of the band.

Luis: Atsushi played drums for En La Olla in 2010, then when the band broke up we felt like we needed to do something else so we talked to Verde and John about a new band project and we all agreed to do something new. We started the band with a lot of expectations and wound up with the following line up: Atsushi, gritos / John, guitarra / Luis, bajo / Verde, bataka.

MRR: What does Sei To Shi mean?

Luis: Life and Death: 生 (Sei) と (to) 死 (Shi). That's the only thing that we know is true.

Atsushi: *Vida y muerte*.

John: Life and death, cycle of life.

MRR: What were your influences? Did you have a certain sound in mind?

Luis: I really like bands with a strong attitude and crude lyrics. No, we didn't have a sound in mind. When we started Sei To Shi I didn't even know how to play bass. Atsushi had never sung before so this was our opportunity to learn and to try something new. We all had a lot of things to say and Sei To Shi was a good way to say it. Atsushi wrote a lot of lyrics about the problems he saw in NYC and I think we all felt and identified with it.

John: Mine influences have always been '80s Scandinavian, German, Polish, and Japanese punk as well as raw Latin American music.

MRR: What was your first show?

Luis: I think we played with Question in Brooklyn.

Atsushi: When I saw Question in NYC for the first time, I was shocked! I was so proud to play with them.

John: It was in Brooklyn with Nomad and it was fun as fuck.

MRR: I booked a show with you guys, Nomad, Dodworth and Anti-Armada. That was a fun show. Locals only! What was your favorite show that you played?

Luis: That show and when we played at the Swamp with (A)TRUTH. Good times.

Atsushi: All our shows were favorite to me

John: At the Swamp- good chaos and pogo as well.

MRR: Why did you do a CD release only?

Luis: We did a CD because we didn't have enough money to make tapes or records. Making CDs was very affordable. Atsushi was going back to Japan after we recorded the demo so we tried to do something easy and simple, the Sei To Shi – 違法だからなんだ Demo CD.

John: We only did a CD because we didn't have too much money, and yes that's all we did.

MRR: Tell us about your EP that's coming out. Why release a record after the fact?

Luis: This is a four-song EP plus an insert with a photo collage and lyrics in Japanese and English. We always wanted a Sei To Shi record but we didn't have the chance to have one until you asked us if we wanted to put our demo on vinyl. Now that the record is out we feel very lucky. You knew our band since the beginning and you also invited us to play shows.

John: Why not, fun's not dead! If someone calls you and offers to engrave a great sound on a piece of plastic that you can listen to with a needle, I believe you will say yes!

MRR: Who did the art?

Luis: Josh Niezen. I really like his artwork and he is always helping bands. I wanna thank him for all his effort with the Sei To Shi covers.

MRR: Do you feel that you primarily existed within the Latino punk scene in NYC?

Luis: No, there were a few Latino punk bands in New York already. Most of them played only for a short time like A.R.A. and Skabs for example, and HUASIPUNGO, which is still active.

John: I never thought about classifying myself in a race scene, I don't believe in it. Punk is all about no boundaries, flags, race, ethnicity, sex, et cetera.

Luis: I never liked the term "Latino Punk." I just hope that we all get together to make a better punk scene because in my opinion I see it as a little bit divided.

John: I honestly try to avoid micro scenes and try to see the big picture, cause to me they are all the same.

MRR: Would you do anything differently if you had to do Sei To Shi over again?

Luis: No, I would leave it the way it was.

John: Yes! More music, records, touring and great times with the crew.

MRR: You're planning on doing a reunion for your 7", right?

Luis: Yes, we are excited about it. Atsushi is coming back to New York in January and we hope to play some shows in NYC and Philly.

MRR: Any last words?

Luis: I wanna thank all the bands and friends that supported us. No one will stop our dreams.

John: Keep it up and hope for the best. DIY or die! Cheers from NYC!

nightriderrecords.blogspot.com

SCAB EATER

For better or worse, *the intensity of Scab Eater's live shows and their total dedication to touring have earned them quite the reputation in Australia. Along with almost roasting their drummer alive by playing behind pillars of burning napalm in a drain and falling into the crosshairs of some pissed off patriots, Scab Eater's short existence of just under three years has seen them tour relentlessly around Australia and Asia. The singer Will and new bass player Alex are both recent arrivals to Australia from Boston, USA, whilst the other two members, Jake and Nathan were born and bred in Melbourne, Australia. Australian visa restrictions keep the Melbourne-based band on their toes; just like a shark, they can never stop moving. The four-piece play their own brand of slam-friendly American style hardcore punk, but tweaking what has now become a well-known sound into something weird and unique. The lyrics have emerged from more self-deprecating themes in their earlier releases to incorporate more commentary on the Australian and global political climate. With the new 7" Mind Trench soon to be released on Australian label Hardcore Victims, I caught up with the boys on a rooftop in Footscray to discuss some of the band's antics and what's in the future for Scab Eater.*

Interview and introduction by Tessa Tribe. Photos provided by the band.

MRR: Introduce yourselves
Nathan: I play guitar.
Jake: I play drums.
Alex: I play trumpet.
Nathan: We're a ska band now apparently.
Will: Vocals.

MRR: You guys have made a bit of a name for yourself in Australia as the band that does the insane tours. What's your motivation behind doing months of touring in places most bands give a couple of weeks? What's behind the drive to always try to include smaller towns and cities in Australia that rarely make the punk tour circuit?
Nathan: Parkway Drive did it [laughs].
Alex: What the fuck else are we gonna do in Australia?
Will: It's still very worthwhile. Places like the Sunshine Coast and Canberra have been some of the best shows and we've met some really great people there which makes us always want to go back. When bands tour Australia they only worry about the major cities and maybe places like Canberra are lucky to get a weekday show.
Nathan: And even then they mostly get breezed through. We're booking our third Australian tour, which is a bit shorter than the other ones. We're trying to include some of the smaller towns but we're trying to give these smaller towns precedence.
Will: Can I just mention how sick playing Wyalla was and that Nathan got a free guitar at the show?
Jake: Another cool thing about small towns: when we did Wyalla it was originally in a guy's living room but the cops came around because of the noise. There were a only a handful of people, but then these girls put their hands up and said, "well you can play in our flat." It was literally a tiny granny flat.
Will: There was no microphone so I was just yelling over everyone.
Nathan: It wasn't a very glamorous show but it means a lot to us to be entertaining the ten misfit kids that were bored in this tiny town that weekend. It's sicker to imagine you're some kid living in a place where no one likes the same things as you politically or musically, where nothing ever happens, and then a band that can do it goes out of there, even if it's only playing to a handful of people.
Will: Some young kid tagged our name on a wall...we were stoked that we were able to go to a small place. For them it was the first time in a long time they'd had a band tour through there.
Nathan: The most off the hook show was Sabah [Malaysia] or Bandung [Indonesia].
Jake: I say Bandung. When we went there they said since Pisschrist went there however many years ago, they can't have shows in the city anymore.

MRR: How come?
Jake: When Pisschrist went there it was fucking massive. Not just cops but immigration officials came and Pisschrist couldn't even play. Nearly 1000 people showed up, but since then they can't have gigs in Bandung city anymore. For us the organizers hired a holiday house up in the hills outside the city.
Alex: That someone would normally rent for a big wedding.
Jake: They told the owner that they were having a wedding and then at the last minute sent out mass texts and everyone rode motorbikes out there for the gig.
Alex: Afterwards the owners said, "Why were there footprints on the ceiling for your wedding?"
Jake: It went totally nuts, walls were broken and the roof was getting torn down. It was completely wild.
Alex: There was a pillar that got totally removed at one point.
Will: Our favorite tour story that we always come back to was meeting our Filipino cop friends.
Nathan: We got to the Philippines and we were playing a show out in the countryside near Manila. There were 20 bands playing starting from 8:30 and ending at 12, everyone shared instruments with no tuning and each band played about three songs each.
Will: It was punk as fuck.
Nathan: Someone stole my t-shirt.
Will: Someone stole my vest on the first damn day of tour.
Jake: I swapped shoes with a guy and they didn't fit me.
Nathan: He got a bit of a raw deal on that one.
Jake: I couldn't find shoes anywhere in Asia in my size so for the rest of the two-month tour I wore bloody thongs.[1]
Nathan: On day two we played a tattoo convention in the same town, but then we got offered another show at a skate competition before the tattoo show. There was all kinds of shit going on. There were Tech Decks, a Tech Deck world where

1. Australian for flip-flops... not the underwear.

miniature skateboards could be attached to the ends of people arms. And of course lots of actual skateboarding.
Will: While we played the organizer was tearing my shirt and trying to grab me, being super wasted and having a great time at our expense.
Nathan: His band played before us. The band was like a New York City bro hardcore band.
Jake They did a great Madball cover.
Nathan: Which ruled, let it be known it was "Pride." They sung a lot of songs about New York but were from the Philippines but we all sang along all the same.

Afterwards the guy from that band who was also the grabby organizer, he was hassling me, still super wasted, saying he wanted us to play next year. He'd be like, "fuck you" and punch me and then go back to saying how great we were. Then he'd say, "fuck you" and punch me again and again until his friends eventually had to drag him away. As he was getting dragged away he yelled "I'm the local police officer for this area," and I of course thought he was full of shit.

Later on we were jumping in the back of a Hilux getting a lift with some of the other bands to go get dinner before the next show and I asked them, is this guy really a cop? And they said, "Yeah he's a cop, and we're all cops too" and they all pulled out their badges.
Will: These tough Filipino guys still had their bandanas and balaclavas on after playing in their hardcore bands and turns out they were all cops [laughs].
Jake: We had dinner with them afterwards but it was very awkward.
Nathan: Let it be known that we appreciate the hospitality and the context of small-town Filipino police is very different to here. It's not that it isn't fucked that they're cops, but it's a bit different considering there were in total no more than three to ten cops and they were all drunk as fuck hanging out and smoking weed at the show that the detective of the town organized.

They took us to dinner and then we got to the next show where they dropped us off at the tattoo convention, which was super fancy with catering and stage lights. The gig was sponsored by Adidas, Dunkin' Donuts & Honda. Once again it came down to the context thing about them not being able to have the money to put on something like this without corporate sponsorship and us not being comfortable with it, but not being able to communicate that without seeming ungrateful.
Will: Especially with the language barrier. To be on a bill with a bunch of corporations that we don't want to be affiliated with or support, but at the same time within the local context we have to recognize some punk shows may not be able to happen without it. So we swallowed it as opposed to when we would've been in an English speaking or more affluent country.
Jake: After that tattoo convention, they said there was another show down the road and we ended up playing three shows in eight hours, which was pretty gnarly.

MRR: Will, you often make a point to illustrate the meanings of your songs in your live sets, often which are quite political. Recently the original Scab Eater bassist Owen left. Now with Alex on bass the ratio of Americans to Australians is 2:2. Has this changed the band's outlook or politics content-wise?
Will: Having Alex in the band now I feel less apprehensive about penning lyrics about American politics, but on our new *Mind Trench* EP all the songs pertain to Australia. I understand it would've been okay beforehand, but we're an Australian band and there are a million bands writing about politics all over the world. I want it to be relative to where I've been living and where we've been touring and our immediate audience, so no it hasn't changed a lot.

MRR: Tell us about the new *Mind Trench* EP. Did you guys take a different approach than the Demo & Self Titled 7"?
Will: I'd say it's quite a different approach, the first 7" was rushed a bit, because I had to leave the country and wouldn't be back indefinitely because I'm an American national. The new one we worked on more, Nathan pulled out all sorts of fun new experimental guitar riffs that I think are more interesting than stuff on the demo and first record.
Jake: It's not as straightforward hardcore.
Nathan: There are more hooks and twist and turns.
Will: It's also a bit more politically driven lyrically than previous stuff. Yeap from Hardcore Victims is putting it out, should be out very soon, early 2016.

MRR: Tell me about the incident affectionately named "Scab Gate" that happened on your last Australian tour. Want to set the record straight?
Will: I'm gonna shut my mouth before I get killed.
Alex: It was sick.
Nathan: Get outta here, mate.
Will: I didn't know anyone called it Scab Gate.
Alex: Why is it called Scab Gate?

MRR: Watergate reference I guess?
Will: I don't really know what there is to clear up...

MRR: People outside of Australia I don't think necessarily know about it, I think it's an interesting story...
Will: Okay, I guess. To give context, one of our final shows of our two-month Australian tour in early 2015 was in a very small city outside of Sydney called Wollongong, around the same time as ANZAC day.[2]

We all got a bit loose after the gig. We were drinking at a war memorial park down the road because we all got kicked out of the pub. Someone tagged it with our band name and a pretty violent anti-war slogan, "No tears for dead soldiers."

Straight after it happened some of the locals who also got kicked out of the pub showed up bloody after getting kicked out for fighting. They started a fight with us, and one of the guys from the local band Ruckus ate some glass and then proceeded to glass me. He beat the shit out of our friend from the UK who didn't even have anything to do with it.

We decided to make a statement about it because we were getting all sorts of death threats and emails, reporters and cops were on our tail.
Nathan: In the end we made a statement about the issue because we were still due to finish our tour and play Total Attack festival in Brisbane, which now had become a big target for racists and boneheads. The statement said that we were going to pull out of Total Attack, otherwise there would've been so much more heat on the festival and it would've affected many more people than just us. We didn't want to fuck over other people, and yes there was other stuff we wanted to say about how we felt about the war memorial, but I don't know if anyone reading this has ever had "the fear" or a hangover before but sometimes you do some shit when you're drunk that partially is cool, but partially is very not cool and this was one of those things. If people want to make a big deal about some drunken shit they can, because we'll pick it apart. This was not activism.
Will: The graffiti isn't anything we stand behind logically, soldiers have always been the working poor, minorities or the uneducated within society just treated as cannon fodder by the government. So a statement like "no tears for dead soldiers" implies that you're discounting the fact that lots of people sign up for war because of propaganda. So yeah, we don't stand behind the statement, but we also do not condemn the action.

MRR: So you're saying what was written was probably not that well thought out...
Jake: Soldiers have throughout history been an exploited working class. But in the end ANZAC day has now been distorted into nothing more than a day of blatant patriotism and nationalism.

MRR: So you're saying this was a drunk idea of trying to buck against that but it maybe didn't come out so well...
Will: It wasn't even that, it was just cunts writing our name on walls again.
Nathan: And this wall just happened to be a war memorial, it happened to be right around ANZAC day and it could've been any other wall but it happened to have something about war in it. At the time we didn't think about it much but I'll tell you what, a lot of other people had a very emotional response and thought about it quite a lot. Even people who were on our side thought about it way too much and everyone got on the blower and then ended up getting written about for weeks and weeks and weeks on the internet and in the mainstream media, and here we are talking about it still now again.

2. *ANZAC day is an Australian national holiday that is meant to mark a large battle in World War I in which a lot of Australian and New Zealander soldiers lost their lives.*

MRR: The incident put you guys in the crosshairs of a lot of pretty intense right wing boneheads and some pissed off punks it seems. Do you think the intense reaction of the right wing to this incident speaks more generally about the current climate in Australia or was this just a bad idea at a bad time of year?
Jake: It just highlights again what ANZAC day has become to people: another day to celebrate Aussie pride, like that video that the United Patriots Front[3] made about us, it's ridiculous.

MRR: Wasn't that some crazy video linking Slackbastard to Scab Eater?
Jake: Yeah they were trying to link Slackbastard in, saying he made us do it.
Nathan: For those who don't know Slackbastard is the name of an anarchist blog in Australia that right wing nationalists have chosen to name as a figurehead for a movement without leaders because they can't understand who they need to pinpoint.

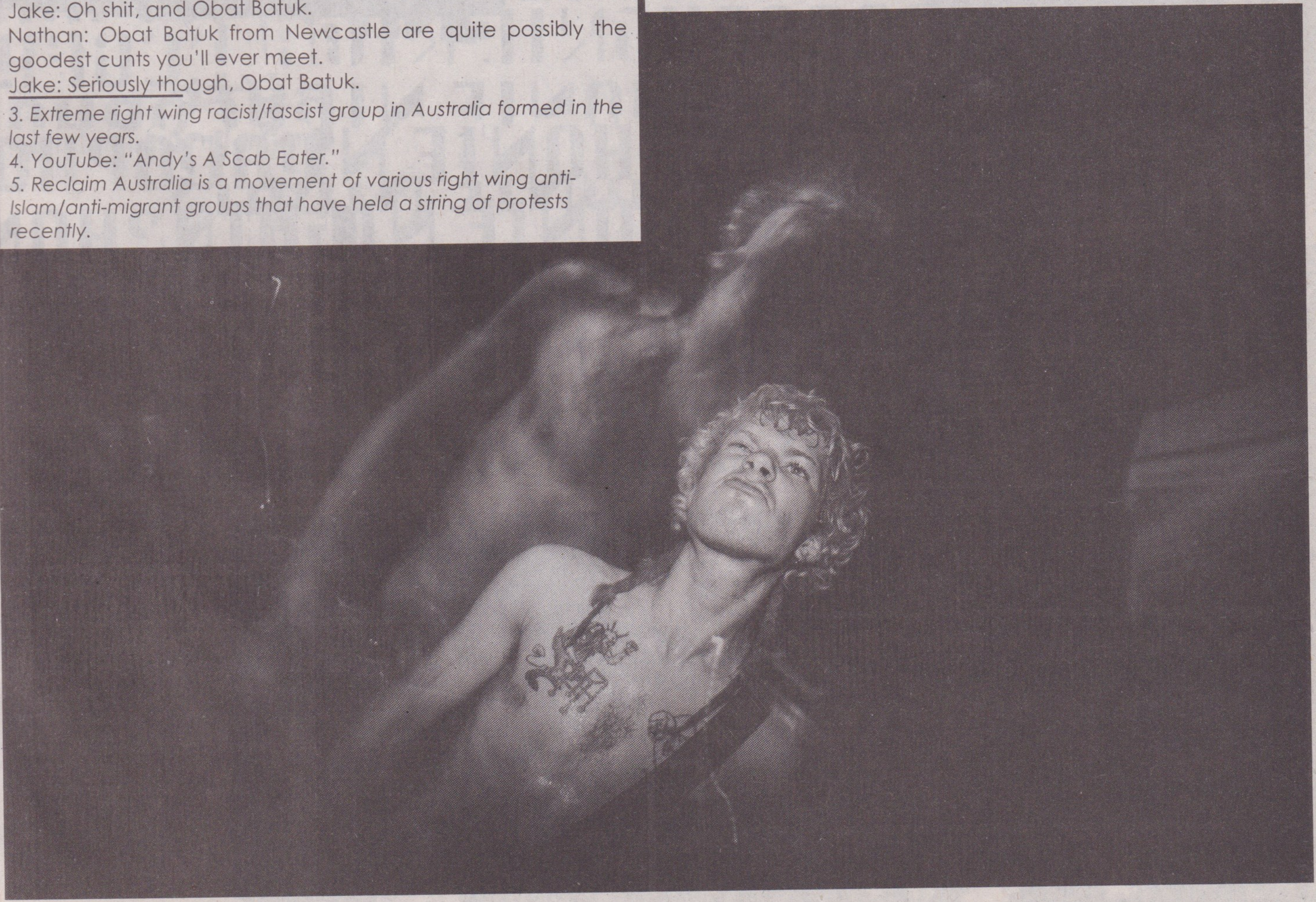
MRR: That video is fucking hilarious; I hope people read this and look it up.[4]
Jake: They were also saying we had a hand in organizing the Reclaim Australia counter-rallies.[5]
Will: I'm not sure if they said that, maybe just insinuated it, they just highlighted that Alex and I were at the protest throwing cop's horse shit at the Patriots though [laughs].

MRR: What're your favourite bands playing at the moment, Melbourne or elsewhere?
Nathan: Soma Coma rules.
Jake: Yeah, please stop breaking up Soma Coma!
Jake: Rogue Elephant.
Alex: I hate music.
Will: Daily Ritual from Singapore.
Jake: Oh shit, and Obat Batuk.
Nathan: Obat Batuk from Newcastle are quite possibly the goodest cunts you'll ever meet.
Jake: Seriously though, Obat Batuk.

3. Extreme right wing racist/fascist group in Australia formed in the last few years.
4. YouTube: "Andy's A Scab Eater."
5. Reclaim Australia is a movement of various right wing anti-Islam/anti-migrant groups that have held a string of protests recently.

MRR: What's in the future for Scab Eater?
Jake: European tour mid 2016.
Will: Hopefully.
Jake: What do you mean hopefully?
Will: No, it's happening…hopefully.
Nathan: Deportation.
Jake: The fact that there's two Americans in an Australian band means we have to travel to keep the band going, as many places as we can is the plan. And the LP is being recorded soon; the new *Mind Trench* EP is out very soon.

scabeaterhc.bandcamp.com



CACOPHONIE NIGHTS

CACOPHON

photos by skankboi69

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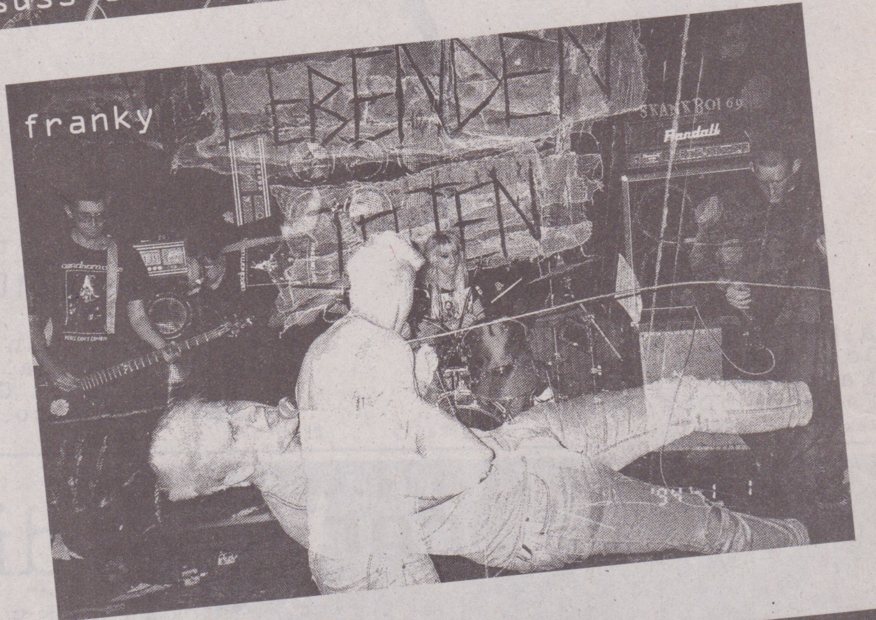

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Fatigue--"Dog Bodies" EP .... San Francisco, CA
Next: ...... Humiliation ..... Hunting Party ..... Eightball ..... Scalped .... EPs

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

Year End Top Tens 2015

THIS LAST YEAR WAS SURELY ONE OF THE WORST IN RECORDED MEMORY.

End times have always produced great punk music though and this was no exception. 2015, the year we all learned where Indiana is on a map, did the "Outcast Stomp," and wished we could speak Catalan. As is tradition, this issue is filled with lists. There was grumbling in the ranks when we mandated that the prompt be taken literally this time around: write about the top ten pieces of music released in the past year. Not top ten LPs, top ten 7"s and top ten tapes. Ten mind-melting pieces of music total. MRR reviewers, columnists and shitworkers submitted lists, along with some of our friends who edit fanzines, run record labels, and organize fests. Your favorite record of the year isn't one of the 232 written about in the next 40 pages? Write to us and tell us what genius we're overlooking and then we'll tell the world about it: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

NAMES IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Maximum Rocknroll TOP TENS 2015:

Al Quint
Allan McNaughton
Amelia Eakins
Andrew Underwood
Brendan Wells
Bryony Beynon
Camylle Reynolds
Carolyn Keddy
Dan Goetz
Eli Wald
Emmy Ramone
Erika Elizabeth
Felix Havoc
Grace Ambrose
Greg Harvester
Imogen Binnie
Jason Ryan
Justin Briggs
Layla Gibbon
Lydia Athanasopolou
Matt Badenhop
Max Wickham
Mitch Cardwell
Ray Martinez
Rotten Ron Ready
Shit Zoo
Turbo
Viktor Vargyai

COMMUNITY at LARGE:

Arto Hietikko
Ben Trogdon
Dave Hyde
Greg Benedetto
Joe Briggs
Laura Lança
Paco Mus
Ralph Rivera
Shequalizing Distort
Shivaun Watchorn
Sorry State Records
Tessa Tribe

AL QUINT *is a columnist for* MRR.

I'll be blunt—a good chunk of this year completely sucked. I said the same thing about 2014, but this year was even worse. A close family member was seriously ill earlier this year, but thankfully, she's recovered 100%. We lost a close friend to cancer in April and some other friends have had health battles as well. And there were other obstacles, some of them quite serious, to overcome this year. I'm not going to go into any more detail because I prefer to keep a good amount of my private life just that—private. I will say that things have improved a lot the past few months.

As for music, there really wasn't any one record or release that stood out from the pack. Lots of very good records but nothing completely transcendent. Many of the records in this list could be considered the best, but I've put everything more or less in order. Today, anyway. These did all log a fair amount of time on my turntable and various other listening devices.

LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
LA MISMA draw from the musical well of the Toxic State and Katorga Works bands—buzzing and pressing ahead at a steady but not-too-slow clip, adding post-punk touches on some of the songs. A pealing and stinging guitar sound is underpinned by sturdy and versatile bass lines and drumming, and the high-pitched Portuguese vocals from Nay Rosario (ex-EUNUCH) are a combination of abrasive and endearing. They do slow it down for each side's closer—"Martiz e Vidro" and "Afirmação"—with stick-in-head melodies emerging from each. Great packaging, as you'd expect from Toxic State.

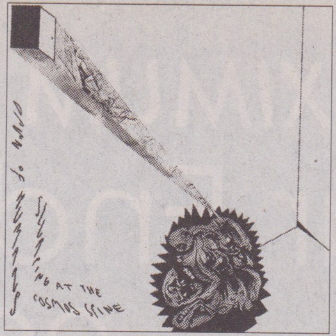
DAWN OF HUMANS – *Slurping at the Cosmos Spine* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Although DAWN OF HUMANS have been around for the better part of ten years, this is their first full-length. It's got that same noisy, spazzed-out, fuzzed-out sound that's also been used by CRAZY SPIRIT (among others), with strangled/nasal vocals. Shuffling, tinny drums and distorted guitar and bass, but varying in tempo. They slow it down to a dirge for "Grapitudonce of Hinsenctor" (I have no idea) and "Horse Blind," the latter with the same feel as a song like RUDIMENTARY PENI's "Army of Jesus." Weird and entrancing stuff.

URANIUM CLUB – *Human Exploration* 12" (Fashionable Idiots)
This band has an offbeat, jabbing sound that occasionally brings EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING to mind—i.e. a collision of garage-inspired rock with '77 WIRE-y impulses given a modern polish, along with occasional bracing, hard-charging bursts of punk energy and some industrial clatter. The lyrics are cheeky but in a dark way—a sinister undertow to what might be a stalker tale for "The Collector" or the murder ballad of "The Misadventures Of Prissy Chrissy." They pull a fast one by putting fake labels on the record and claiming that it was a mix-up at a pressing plant in the Czech Republic. They almost had me.

CONEHEADS – *L.P.1 Aka 14 Year Old High School PC-Fascist Hype Lords Rip Off Devo For The Sake Of Extorting $$$ From Helpless Impressionable Midwestern Internet Peoplepunks* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / International Players Club)
CONEHEADS play weird'n'wonderful minimalist new wave/punk that, indeed, has a pronounced DEVO inspiration, with even more robotic vocals. It also features my favorite cover of the year, their take on "Psycho Killer" by the TALKING HEADS.

USA NAILS – *No Pleasure* CD (Bigoût / Smalltown America)
Despite their name, USA NAILS is a London-based band. This is their second album and it has a sound that will nail your head to the floor (sorry)—loud and heavy, with huge, ominous riffing that creates a powerful swarm from the outset. There are spacier effects here and there, along with the occasional JESUS LIZARD lurch. A dark and menacing concoction that you'll want to play at a high volume. This could have come out on Amphetamine Reptile in '93. That's meant as a compliment.

HALDOL – 12" (Grim Winds / World Gone Mad)
HALDOL started in Nashville, and then guitarist/vocalist Geoff Smith moved to Philly and retooled the lineup, shedding the earlier hardcore elements and going for a darker goth/post-punk sound. The edgy and



powerful songs are driven by tribal rhythms, thick, fluid bass-lines, and nightmarish guitar, and come across like a combination of KILLING JOKE and PART 1, most of it done at a healthy pace.

CUNTZ – *Force the Zone* LP (Homeless)
Force the Zone is this Australian band's third album in just a few years, and it's the best I've heard so far. It's not that the other ones sucked or anything, but this one seems more focused and has sharper production. Gnarled'n'jabbing post-punk with a garage-tinged feel, taking some of its inspiration from X (the Australian one, of course). The earlier releases conjured up FEEDTIME and PISSED JEANS to an extent, but that's largely absent on this disc. They've really found their sound here.

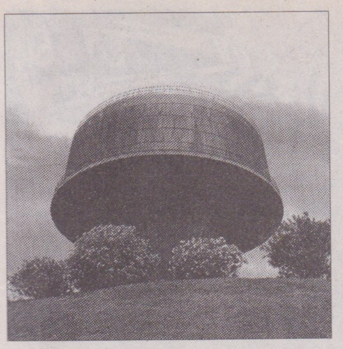
G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)
I imagine this demo will be on many of my *MRR* compatriots' lists as well, as it should be. An onslaught of in-your-face hardcore punk, with equally in-your-face lyrics screamed in your face, in fact, by new *MRR* columnist Sadie Switchblade. The overall sentiment of this band is stated in resounding fashion on "Outcast Stomp." It's a call to arms for those who have been rejected due to sexual orientation, gender, or any other norm that is forced on people, and frankly, they don't give a fuck about what anyone thinks. I am still kicking myself big-time for missing their two shows here.

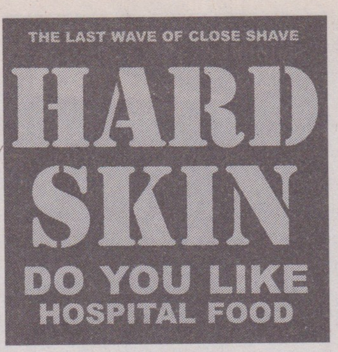
INSTITUTE – *Catharsis* LP (Sacred Bones)
I imagine it's a sign of a good record when I can't get certain melody lines out of my head. That happens with some of the songs here (as it did with "Salt of the Earth" on their previous 12" and their best song "Giddy Boys"). Mose's vocals have a slurry flatness and detachment, which could be a deal-breaker for some, but the musicianship is so strong that it compensates for any reservations. A self-analytical lyrical bent, save for the slow-building eight-minute closer "Christian Right" (timely, sadly enough). What they do is so simple—a deceptively catchy minimalism, percolating bass and steady drums mixing it up with guitar packing melodic nuance, as well as straight-ahead power.

SLUGGA – "Parasite/Shaved Heads" 45 (Total Punk)
This 7" is just two songs, and goddamn, I hope they have more in the pipeline, because "Parasite" is one of the best songs I heard this year. Both sides are snarling and mean, and "Parasite" even has a bit of a hook. I can't think of the last time I put a 7" with only two tracks in the top ten. This deserves it.

Honorable Mentions: CHAIN RANK – *Up Against the Wall* LP and live / L.O.T.I.O.N. – *Digital Control and Man's Obsolescence* LP / LONGINGS – 12" / TØRSÖ – *Sono Ponta A Morire* LP and live / VAASKA – *Todos Contra Todos* LP / VIOLENT REACTION – *Marching On* / WOODBOOT – *Crime Time* LP / BLANK SPELL – *Malign Eye* 7" / IVY – *A Cat's Cause, No Dogs Problem* EP / Q – *Recqrd* EP / SNOB – *Quit Your Job* EP / LATEX – *Losing Game* EP / LEATHER DADDY – *Inside* EP / YOUTH BRIGADE – *First Demo Summer '81* EP / SPLAT – *Negmo* EP / ANCIENT FILTH – *Everything In the Void* CS and live / CRUDE HUMOR – *Jeri's Grill* CS / FLYKILLS – *Squirrel* CS / GROTTO – *Pink Sock* CS / ISS – CS / OAF – *III* CS / 2X4 live / INFEST live / KRÖMOSOM live / LOS CRUDOS live / RETOX live / SADIST live / SAVAGEHEADS live / SUDOR live / TOTAL FURY live

... in loving memory of Chelle LaBarge (1966 - 2015)





ALLAN McNAUGHTON *is one of the longest-standing reviewers at* MRR. *He plays in a new Bay Area band called NEUTRALS.*

SACRED PAWS – *Six Songs* 12" (Rock Action)
You can fly from Glasgow to London for less than a hundred quid, and the train is much faster. So the bus is really just broken teeth and tracksuits and '90s indie musicians without record deals.

Rain streaks the window all the way down. People get on in dreary English bombsites like Carlisle or Preston but no one gets off. At every stop the people pile out for the necessary smoke. Unlit fags in mouths as they disembark, not to lose a vital second.

When you get off at King's Cross every jakey with outstretched palm has got a Glasgow accent. Were they all like you once, got off the Londonliner and decided this was far enough?

ROYAL HEADACHE – *High* LP (Distant & Vague / What's Your Rupture)
STOLEN ALPACA RECOVERED IN RAID ON GYPSY JOKER CLUBHOUSE

"What the fuck's an alpaca?"

"It's some kinda cross between a goat and a 'roo I reckon".

"What the fuck are we gonna do with one?"

"I dunno... Flick it on? Ransom it?"

"Ransom it? Ya stupid mongrel. I told ya. Fags, pills, guns, booze. We're bikies. We're not fuckin' zookeepers. You wanna be part of this gang you better get your fuckin' head straight mate. Big Ron's gonna kick your teeth in when he gets back. Get rid of it."

FLESH WORLD – *The Wild Animals In My Life* LP (Iron Lung)
Two weeks out of barber college and he made the appointment for the scissors tattoo. It looks great in the mirror on his flexing bicep, t-shirt rolled a couple of times like a '50s hoodlum. It really complements the DEATH IN JUNE logo, Morrissey lyric, and the diagram of pig butcher cuts from when he thought he was going to become a chef.

HARD SKIN – *Do You Like Hospital Food* LP (JT Classics)
999 CALL AFTER STOKE NEWINGTON POLICE STAFF FALL MYSTERIOUSLY ILL

They were gauny stop ma benefits if ah didn't take this yin. Fine ah says. OK I'll take it. So there ah wis. The fuckin Stokey Police canteen! Evry lunchtime, servin' up slop tae pigs. "All Employees Must Wash Hands After Using Bathroom." Aye right!

NO – *Treating People Like They Don't Exist* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
TV SHOWS>HOME AND AWAY>SLASH/INCEST>

Shower & Piss: Brax/Heath – 3/10

I can only rate this 3 out of 10 in Home and Away slash fiction. If you are going to put it in the INCEST category you have to have the Braxton brothers do more than watch each other wank in the shower. Also took off a point for repetition. We get it, they're hot and tanned. You don't have to put it in every paragraph.

COLD BEAT – *Into the Air* LP (Crime on the Moon)
They're taking over the beach now. Hayes Valley by the sea. Wake up and smell the cinnamon toast. Fancy health clubs have surfing classes at Linda Mar and then the tech bros think they can drop in to OB. You can't have fires on the beach anymore but you can sure buy a surfboard rack for a Tesla.

RADIOACTIVITY – *Silent Kill* LP (Dirtnap)
You know how you lie half asleep, reliving painful moments when you were at your worst? Hurtful words or letters never sent. Well Willie never slept at all. Just lay there humming as he recharged, his solid state memory cycling through every gig. He had no means of external communication, so every unanswered human smile or friendly hello made his every chip ache. So close to sentience, yet so far. The humans could be so kind to a lowly maintenance iDrone™. He and his ilk kept their work-world spotlessly clean, as well as sparing them the embarrassment and discomfort of having lower-level humans around to do the dirty work. It pleased them to no longer suffer the awkward silence and downcast eyes when they ran into a cleaning human in the corridor or bathroom. So much so that they cheerfully gave their iDrones™ droll nicknames. Willie was not in fact his real name—he never had one—but some bored human had given him the name, and taped to his façade a printout of a cartoon Scotsman from a popular vintage animated vid from OnDemand™.

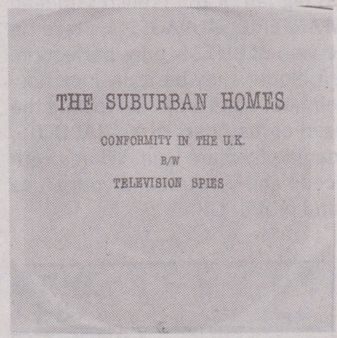
SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK/Television Spies" 45 (Total Punk) and *The Suburban Home* EP (Market Square)
In 2015, a human being thought it was worthwhile to take the time to do a Google street view search of the addresses accompanying 1980s *Maximum Rocknroll* record reviews. The resultant collection of 236 low-resolution images of average suburban homes will be published as a coffee table edition by Harper Collins in 2016.

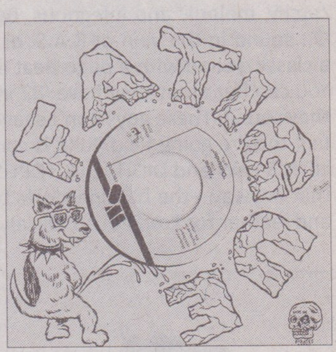
DIÄT – *Positive Energy* LP (Adagio830 / Iron Lung)
Michelle was always up for trying new things. So when Sarah suggested Berlin for spring break she was doubtful at first, but went along with it anyway. Sarah had the hots for some German guy she met on a message board and wanted Michelle to tag along. As soon as they arrived in the bleak, graffiti-scarred part of town where they'd be staying, she regretted her decision. Rolf and his friends were no fun either. Sinew-thin and blue-skinned, with the hollow eyes of the never-slept. Nothing like the buff, tanned bros they'd partied with on the boat last spring at Lake Havasu. Although it was admittedly nice that Rolf's friends didn't drunkenly grope her every time her back was turned. The days barely got light, and the nights went on endlessly. And what was this music? Repetitive and machine-like, the occasional familiar rhythm or sample buried beneath an abrasive film of grime. No wonder the drugs were different. It took a lot more than lite beer and a wet t-shirt contest to have fun here. Michelle danced absent-mindedly, stared into space and dreamed of Arizona sunshine.

FATIGUE – *Dog Bodies* EP (Warthog Speak)
THE NEEDLE AND THE DAMAGED II

The irony.

Straightedge since high school and now hooked on the needle—the insulin needle. All I wanted was a Pepsi. And a vegan donut.





Maximum Rocknroll TOP TENS 2015

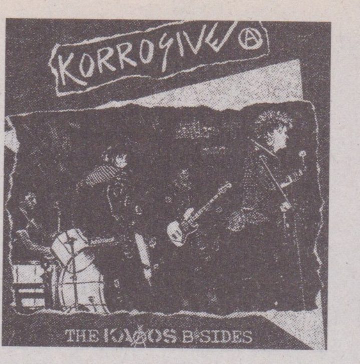
AMELIA EAKINS *is a former distribution coordinator of* MRR. *She plays in VIOLENCE and runs Nightrider Records.*

I released three records on my label this year, and if I did not think they were the best of the best, I would not have released them. That said, in an effort to make sure I was not in poor taste putting my own releases in my Top Ten, I reached out to some trusted punks and confidants. Mark Shubert of Beach Impediment Records stated, "I could only think of a few sick records that came out this year, all of which are on some sick label from the Bay Area." He then proceeded to suggest I just submit my cats: "Or just submit a picture of Merle for 12"s and Bomber for 7"s since kitties are better than most things on Earth." Well, that solves a lot of things. I really knew my 2015 Top Ten was legit when Jesse Cunningham, current Portland Punk star, stated, "Why not? It's a free country. My dad didn't fight in 'Nam for you not to be able to make whatever lists you want." So with that, thank you to everyone who supported me this year and thank you to those who support women in punk (this includes women who support other women). Also, try and count how many times I use the word "punk" in my top ten. Here is my year-end top ten in no order, faithfully yours in Punk:

G.I.S.M. – *Determination* CD (Beast Arts)
Determination is a collection of G.I.S.M.'s hits remastered by Suzuki with art by Sakevi. The art is disturbingly graphic and reflects the current state of world affairs filtered through a mind war and conspiracy theories. I own several G.I.S.M. releases on vinyl in mint condition (which all sound like angels fucking) but there is a special clarity on this release. The crispness of the compact disc format and the remastering cause all facets of the magic of G.I.S.M. to shine through in their entirety, especially Randy Uchida's guitar. The guitar on "Shoot to Kill" has repeatedly evoked powerful emotions and visceral reactions in me, but it hits harder with the remastering. It is a warranted preservation of Randy Uchida's memory. I am looking forward to seeing G.I.S.M. play their first show outside of Japan at Roadburn Festival in April 2016. This is one of the few CDs that are worth owning, including the cost of shipping from Japan.

C – *Dear Fuckin' Shit All Fascists + 2* LP (Hardcore Survives)
Do you like CRASS? C is a collective of seven people and contains members of CONFUSE and STAGNATION. I am a big fan of both bands, as well as CRASS. This LP packaging is simple in design with a minimalist black and white paper sleeve and plain black inner sleeve, but it comes with a foldout poster similar to Crass Records' releases. This LP is 33RPM political punk from Japan paying homage to our punk roots in pure peace punk perfection. It sounds like *Feeding of the 5000* era CRASS sans Steve Ignorant's grating British accent. No more nightmare, no more nuclear war. Yes, I have a CRASS tattoo.

RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
This record starts off strong and stays strong, and I mean strong as in catchy, melodic and infectious. Being a big fan of the French skinhead Oi! sound in the vein of R.A.S. or L'INFANTERIE SAUVAGE, this take on a classic sound with a pogo beat in the vein of BLITZ is pure perfection. You can hear that they have '82 in their blood. They basically look how they sound. These guys don't shave their heads and look skin to hide the fact they're going bald. RIXE is composed of members of MARABOOTS, LION'S LAW and DIGITAL OCTOPUS meaning they are legit. What's with that anyway—the hairline starts to recede and you trade in your studs and leather for Fred Perry? Oy vey! Stand proud! Oi!



TAMPAX – "Suck My Cock/Snivell" 45 (Rave Up)
This release was a little obscure, so obscure that I only heard about it because Punk & Destroy in Osaka had it. I got in touch with the label directly and was able to procure one of my own, which was surprising as there were only 445 copies pressed. This record has a die-cut hole in the center, shaped like a cock and balls, and requires cock adaptors. This was TAMPAX's idea. TAMPAX are troublemakers. Side A is from their *Let It Shit* LP and Side B is a previously unreleased recording from 1979.

PMS 84 – *Creep* EP (Nightrider)
The 2014 demo is a modern classic, but PMS 84 were still able to top that and release an EP that is even stronger. The band contains members of KOWARD, MORAL HEX and VIVID SEKT but veers away from those sounds in this project. PMS 84 is definitely for those with a penchant for skinhead anthems, the finest French and British Oi! and bleachers. But since this band exists in Portland, there is reverb on the vocals and they are a punk band through and through (not just some Oi! echo). A solid EP for a solid band.

EEL – *Fuck Off, the Human Insect* EP (Beach Impediment)
This is not the first time EEL has received mention in my top ten and I doubt it will be the last. EEL will not die; they are the noise cockroaches of punk. This release is a definite homage to '80s Japanese punk with distinct nods to L.S.D. and ZOUO. The record comes with a brilliant foldout poster featuring Taylor Swift with "PRAISE THE LORD AND PASS THE AMMUNITION" splayed over her war-mongering heartless chest. Beach Impediment did a nice job on the packaging with 150 on red vinyl with a stamped green inner sleeve and 700 on black. That said, this record is fancy packaging for dirty noise. Yes, riot to urge peace.

KORROSIVE – *The Kaaos B-Sides* flexi 7" (Nightrider / Shithammer)
KORROSIVE stole the show at All Punks Go For It! Fest this year. They are an amazing band to see live and it transfers well to vinyl. Most flexis sound like garbage, but this was properly mastered for vinyl by Jack Control, solidifying the honorable Finnish worship within its grooves. This release was done for their European tour with APPENDIX.

S.H.I. – 死 CD (Black Lodge / Crust War)
S.H.I. (or STRUGGLING HARSH IMMORTALS) features members of ZOUO, OUTO, and DANSE MACABRE and totals nine members. This CD contains all the tracks from their 2013 EP as well as all the tracks from the 2014 *Lucifer Rising* EP, which were both released on Crust War. It is nice to have a compilation of the jet-black darkness of these nine hits all in one format. "Enter the Hell" is a new song, and there is a dub version of "Suicide Solution" included. The dub version is a haunting take on the original, which has more punk roots. This version has an eerie intro that is beautiful as it slowly evolves and barely resembles "Suicide Solution" at all, unless the original song was trapped in a sea of ketamine as it slowly dissolved into electronic ether. The new song "Enter The Hell" draws from classic metal punk roots and continues the dark spiral, but adds in that electronic element which S.H.I. has mastered, with driving drums and multiple vocals complete with a breakdown. I believe this release was fittingly limited to 666 copies. It is officially distributed by the honorable MCR Company.

SEI TO SHI – 生と死 EP (Nightrider)
This band transcends borders and nationalities and cannot be pigeonholed or easily categorized as a certain regional sound. That said, members of this band were formerly in EN LA OLLA, a Spanish punk band from NYC who were active during my formative teen years growing

up in the city. When SEI TO SHI started, they had the same spirit as EN LA OLLA with that honest and direct anger, but with Japanese vocals and a faster pace. Their singer is from Kyushu, and thankfully the energy of '80s Kyushu seeped into his heart and is present in their sound. The record is driving and powerful from start to finish. I find it to be the most genuine release of 2015 as they are not trying to fit into a specific genre or sound—they are just being themselves and creating raw punk noise.

CHAOS TRIBE – Demo CS (self-released)
This demo starts off with a catchy intro complete with a phaser pedal. I am a sucker for proper use of phaser pedals. This probably stems from my love of noisy '80s Japanese punk, with which CHAOS TRIBE obviously share an affinity. They then launch into sounding like DISCHARGE on a lot of amphetamines mixed with sped-up Scandi worship with sporadic feedback and punk noise. The whole tape is like this—intros that hook you in and lead you by the nose into a sea of total noise devastation frenzy. You get drunk off the sound and lose yourself. CHAOS TRIBE are the raging noise maniacs from the depths of California hell also known as Fresno. That said, Fresno is a sewer of a city spewing some amazing punk right now.

All in all, this was a really good year for punk internationally and locally. I have watched a stronger punk community evolve in Oakland over the past year. I really enjoyed Manic Relapse fest where WHO KILLED SPIKEY JACKET? and ASPECTS OF WAR killed it; events like these help bring us together. I'd also like to make a special mention of MUTANT ITCH and Dark Raids label and distro in Fresno. Seriously, the best punks. I'm grateful for the blood, sweat and tears of everyone who keeps putting on shows, booking fests, playing in bands, having record labels and fucking doing this thing. Punk is a money pit and a time suck. Punk is the best worst addiction. *Punks not dead.*

ANDREW UNDERWOOD *reviews records and writes a column for* MRR.

This was a tough year to put together a Top Ten list for! There were a ton of great releases across a wide spectrum of styles, and a flurry of fantastic records that came out right as the year was ending, some of which may have to appear in next year's list.

REALIDAD – CS (Alta Intensidaz)
Fitting firmly into a lineage that stretches from DISCHARGE to R.I.P. to INFIERNO DE COBARDES, REALIDAD play stripped-down political D-beat that's simple and readily accessible, placing as much value on the message as the music. This is the kind of release that inspires punks across the world to pick up a guitar, a pair of drumsticks, a spiral bound notebook, or a stencil and do it for themselves. The rough-edged four-track recording perfectly captures the passionate hardcore radikal spirit of the band. Ten songs that leave you wishing there were twenty.

S.A.G.A.L. – *Suckup Aholics Gain Acrobatic Licks* CS (Pissed Off)
Seoul has an amazing hardcore scene right now, and S.A.G.A.L. are right there at the head of the class. Raw, angry and more than a little influenced by mid-period Swedish hardcore, this demo came highly recommended and exceeded every expectation. Pummeling riffs, amazing leads, frantic D-beats and nasty shredded throat vocals—what else do you need? Maybe the best cover of "Vansinnets Historia" you've ever heard? That's included with the price of admission.

FUNDAMENTAL / MUTANT ITCH / STUPID LIFE – *Stupid Mental Itch* CS (Dark Raids)
Three California bands still proudly flying the noize punk banner, all different enough to make a compelling tour package/tape comp. STUPID LIFE embrace the goofy side of the style, a marriage of the DICKIES and the SWANKYS that works much better through these tracks than their earlier demos. FUNDAMENTAL prove that their standout demo was no fluke with their offering of frantic, heavy GAI-style hardcore noize. Definitely the best stuff on the tape, FUNDAMENTAL is a special band. Their *Violent Dance Tape* demo could easily have made this list by itself. MUTANT ITCH edge closer to the crasher style, but leaven the chaos with some choice bouncy bass lines and a very welcome touch of humor.

RECONSIDERATION – *Noise Addicts* EP (Pogo 77)
No surprises here, RECONSIDERATION are lean, mean noize-punk machines, perhaps the pound-for-pound world champs at the moment (or at least the #1 contender). This EP has a bit more hardcore grit (à la *Damaging Noise*-era GAI and *Nuclear Addicts*-era CONFUSE) than their bouncy, cheery demos, but beneath the sheen of feedback noise and the tough riffs, it's still anchored by classic 1-2 drumming, bass-led melodies and snotty vocals. Music for beer drinkers, beer for music drinkers. Play as loud as possible and get dumb.

THE POISON COLA – *Flame of Rising Fist* EP (Not Very Nice)
It feels like a bit of a cheat to put an EP of songs that were recorded between '94 and '97 on a Best of 2015 list, but fuck it, this record is magnificent. Some of the very best riff-driven tough Japanese hardcore ever laid to tape, up there with other less-heralded masters like ACCOMPLICE and BLAZE. The amazing art and layout only add to the quality of the release. If this record doesn't have you pumping your fist in the air and banging your head by the second verse of the first song, we probably can't be friends.

DISORDER / STAGNATION – *UK vs. Japan Noize Core Wars* split EP (Strong Mind Japan)
DISORDER releasing actually good music in 2015 has to be one of the greatest comebacks of all time. Yeah, one track on their side is kind of a throwaway, but fucking hell, "Chaos and Disorder" and "Victim of Police" are full-on singles-era DISORDER classics that sound perfectly in place next to chestnuts like "Rampton Song" and "Life" in their live set. STAGNATION is the Sun Ra to DISORDER's Duke Ellington, pushing the style that DISORDER pioneered into ever stranger uncharted territory. Swirling clouds of guitar and noize and heavily reverb-ed vocals take the fore, supported by drumming that's as informed by free jazz as it is by the 1-2 polka beat and held together by one of the best bass players in punk today. The STAGNATION set featured on the live *UK vs. Japan Noize Core Wars II* CD is a revelation.

STRESS SS – *Fest* EP (Adult Crash)
Fuck, what is there to say about this banger? Simple classic riffs and leads and total thick-neck *Vänd Dig Inte Om*-era TOTALITÄR style driving hardcore that's in and out in a little more than eight tight minutes. Amazing to think that this is a one-man project. One of those records you only have to hear once to realize that it's a modern classic.

FZ-10 – *Kaötika Existencia* EP (Rock SVB)
Ratty, thrashy punk-fucking-rock, held together with duct tape and spite. This is as perfect an expression of the DIY ethic in music-making as you're likely to hear. No lessons, no polish, no "pro-gear, pro-attitude"—just a gang of pissed-off punks banging out raw and angry rants against the system. Every song is a killer, and any of them could have just as easily been produced in 1981 as 2015. Timeless and perfect in its complete lack of perfection. This is definitely the most *punk* record of the year, and it's not even close.

MUERTE – LP (Cabeza de Vaca / Cintas Pepe / SPHC)
Holy shit, I just got this beast and even without having much time to digest it, it seems pretty certain that this is the best LP of 2015. Everything that's great about post-punk, goth punk and straight up gritty punk from the streets is in the mix here. Deceptively simple hooks with

tons of staying power, sung/shouted vocals and driving bass are all buried under layers of fuzz and distortion, producing a powerful and unique sound. Every song is excellent, but "De Noche En La Ciudad" might just be the best punk track of the year.

TETSU AREI – *IV* CD (Break the Records)
For a band that's celebrating its 31st anniversary, TETSU AREI sounds fresher and more vital than most bands with one-tenth of their longevity. While it's fair to say that the TETSU AREI catalog has its fair share of misses alongside the hits, this album definitely weighs heavily on the "hits" side of things. Everything that makes this band great is in full effect, from Butaman's iconic growl to the MOTÖRHEAD/rock'n'roll influence and blazing bass leads. These consummate tough guys even slow things down to include a track that could be fairly described as a ballad. And it's kind of amazing! I hope we don't have to wait fourteen years for the next full-length like we had to for this one.

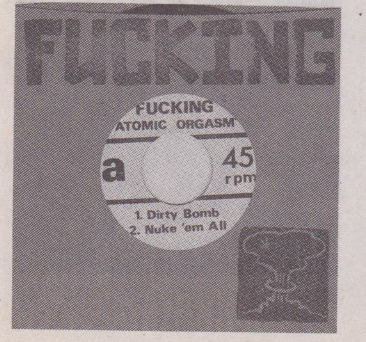
BRENDAN WELLS *plays in URANIUM CLUB and SOLID ATTITUDE. As of January 2016, he will be a content coordinator at* MRR.

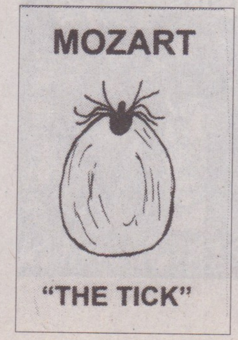
2015 was weird, but what year isn't? URANIUM CLUB went on our first tour, the SOLID ATTITUDE tour with WAVELESS was an absolute pleasure, and I spent a lot of time thinking about plants (and I hope they were thinking about me, too). After passing a series of grueling tests of emotional strength over the last half of the year, I was invited to be a content coordinator here at *MRR*. I'll start work in January, so as of 2016 I'll be a Bay Area punk just like Lars Frederiksen. I'll be sad to leave Minneapolis and the Midwest, but I don't mind taking some time away from these winters that hit negatives in the double digits. Let's play this punk nostalgia game for 2015 and then whoop ass in 2016.

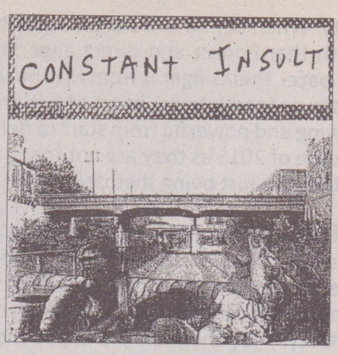
CONSTANT MONGREL – *DCM* EP (R.I.P. Society)
This is the perfect soundtrack to my dirty, future primitive cruising fantasies. It's like UV RACE dialed in on Adderall—motoric, repetitive, and apathetic. What do they mean in the disdainful chant of "the law!"? It has to be hate towards the pigs that bust your cyberpunk ass while you try to get high on binaural beats CDs in the alley. The law! Aussie post-garage at its finest, just one of many great bands from a country that just can't stop spawning slick tunes.

THE BUG – *What's Buggin' You?* CS (Not Normal)
Noisy, detuned hardcore that locks in, falls apart, barfs, and repeats. These vocals are rabid dry-heaves at their best. The whole thing is oppressing and stress-inducing. To me, it's chaotic hardcore, a more deranged and groovy AMPERE with the introspective, melodic parts replaced with a harsh take on kraut rock under the surface. Art don't gotta be pretty, homie. They work out of Chicago, but are something of a 2015 hardcore dream team of people from amazing past bands from other places, like LAUGHBOY and GRASSEATERS. Seeing this band in April was my DIY punk highlight of the year.

FUCKING – *Atomic Orgasm* EP (self-released)
Frantic hardcore in my favorite way possible: dizzying riffs that turn on a dime, and somehow it's all clean enough to hear every note. It's like poppy grind, POISON IDEA hardcore punk vibes with zero attention span for a verse/chorus repetition. The vocal delivery is loose and







disorienting, like they recorded someone ranting in a padded room for five minutes and layered it over the instrumental tracks. The singer demands the annihilation of self through nuclear genocide, screaming from a straightjacket. Keep him alive as punishment, because I need this band to put another record out. More in 2016, please! FUCKING put on some of the best shows in Minneapolis I saw in 2015, and they delivered in a big way on the 7".

MOZART – *The Tick* CS (self-released)
Brilliant and simple shit from the minds behind some dope Bay Area projects of the recent past—YI and STILLSUIT—and the current dictators at *Maximum Rocknroll*. I see it like a no wave-informed GERMS. They bop, they antagonize, and they piss in the pool. I'm looking forward to seeing this band in SF on the regular in 2016.

WILD CHILD – *2015 Tour Tape* CS (self-released)
I almost feel like I shouldn't put this on here because you can't hear it anywhere, but it's just too damn good. Do whatever you can to find this tape. Maybe you can find someone in the Western half of the country to copy this for you. WILD CHILD has been one of my favorite current hardcore bands since their demo hit in 2012, and this newest material is just amazing. They push the style in an original direction with an off-kilter swing and a little bebop flair at times. It's hardcore that grooves with PERE UBU riffs and still punishes. For now, at least, this band is over, so rest in peace, darlings, I was glad to know you in 2015.

BLOBS – CS (More Power)
This is the shit I was dearly waiting for after BROWN SUGAR broke up, but it's more than just a BROWN SUGAR rehash. It's simple and groovy punk with a surfy swing that will shift gears into more frantic, ripping shit. The vocals have enough blood and mucus to let you know when the singer says "I'm all yours" and "Love me, or else," that these aren't love songs. The lyrics seem to sit at that heinous, self-loathing end of relationships, and they really tear me to shreds. My saddest day for music in 2015 was when I found out BLOBS dropped off the show we booked in Syracuse, NY. That was my one chance! Fuck! Oh, and their second tape rules, too!

MYSTIC INANE – *Ode to Joy* EP (Negative Jazz)
Three 7"s down, two of them whooping ass in 2015—this is the best band of the last few years to me. If I have to pick between *Ode to Joy* and *Eggs Onna Plate* for best of 2015, I'll go with *Ode*. I hadn't heard these songs as demos like I had with the *Eggs* EP, so finally picking this up and hearing the tunes was a real treat. They talk about SACCHARINE TRUST and NO TREND in the *MRR* interview, and those sounds are definitely there, but I'm hearing CRISIS and NIRVANA (sue me!) in the mix as well. In 2016, all I ask from Mystic Inane is an LP, three more 7"s, limited run tour tape, and a *No Friends* flexi where they cover a song I already like (NIRVANA?). That's all I ask! Oh, and a new t-shirt!

DAWN OF HUMANS – *Slurping at the Cosmos Spine* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
I saw this labeled as "The *Guernica* of 2015 punk" at the Faith/Void shop in Toronto and I'll agree; Picasso's epic, mangled, and disturbing take on punk rock. More of the catchy and ugly punk you expect from the band, but really reaching their weirdo potential on their first 12" by taking advantage of the space with some instrumental interludes and longer songs. Bands, take this album as a challenge for 2016: weird doesn't just mean slime, make something creative and leave the chumps in the dust.

BIB – Demo CS (self-released)
The fact that this comes out of Omaha's sick-ass scene (that apparently nobody will ever give a shit about) helps send this through the roof for me. They do the straight-ahead, down-stroke pounding hardcore that's not far off from HOAX, but it takes some hints from ugly PISSED JEANS riffing. Tough-guy vocals could have really sent this in an undesirable direction for me, but they sound more like a three-year-old's tantrum in the best way possible. The recording is slick and punishing, miles ahead of your average demo. That's good crank, fam.

CONSTANT INSULT – 12" (Let's Pretend)
I could sing almost every song on here on the first listen after only seeing this band twice last year. It's not easy to write a memorable song like that, but Constant Insult recorded an entire 12"s worth. The region rock genre makes me cringe, but I just can't deny this record, even if that's what it probably is. They kill it with the dual male/female vocal hooks, and the languid and folky riffing sets it apart from being just a pop punk band. If you've needed something to sooth the heartbreak caused by the FROZEN TEENS break up, this is your new crush.

Honorable mentions: PHANTOM HEAD – *Let the Miracles Begin* CS / BLACK PANTIES – *Future* EP / VEXX – *Give and Take* EP / NEUTRAL FIXATION II – *Future Negation* CS / MYSTIC INANE – *Eggs Onna Plate* EP / BLOBS – *Shame* CS

BRYONY BEYNON *is a columnist for* MRR *and a co-op member at the newly opened DIY Space for London. She plays in several bands, including GOOD THROB, EFIALTIS, DREGS, and SEMI.*

This year I'm adding to consensus with a shrug-emoji and a furrowed brow. That some of the groups who made this list were also represented last year shows that we're in an era of bands maturing and continuing to deliver them goods. A deeply appreciated smattering of new blood also makes the cut. Not gonna talk so much facts about each one, cos you'll get that from the more conscientious majority. You've heard it all before, anyway. Zoom out. What gives? Another year. We're alive in the post-endtimes times, nothing fits, the clarity provided by what was once a scary sense of impending doom (Remember 2000? 2008?) has softened to a dull constant thud. Drones in the air, police on the street, pig fuckers in parliament. Better hold hands. BB.

BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
"Nada. Nada. Nada. Nada." "There is no more hope for meaning. And without a doubt this is a good thing, because meaning is mortal." BARCELONA / Baudrillard. How many times have you woken up this year and wanted to stay asleep? Not to repair your body or rest your mind, lie longer with your lover or even leave reality behind, but to just remove yourself from the world altogether? Naming a group after a city was always going to invite a certain reading. Each of these seven songs throbs like a popped blister in the face of constant urban turmoil, pissing lymph in the face of the European neoliberal consensus. This is the soundtrack to an army of punks grown to building size, mouths open, daubed with primary colored acrylic paint, stamping down upon half-built luxury developments, crushing bailiffs, playing ping pong with government buildings. The extremities of nihilist intent should never allow us to forego a stompable beat, and the teasing drums and bass on this record often seem to end mid-bar, like an army of giant booted feet dangling off a precipice. An absolute stunner.

PIG DNA – *Mob Shity* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Twelve inches of ritual chaos and libidinal feedback from the little pigs that could. In the intro to last year's list I name checked Up Against the Wall, Motherfuckers, an anarchist group who called themselves a "street gang with analysis", noting how I hoped more bands in 2015 would take up this mantle of uncompromising vision and disruptive schemes. Only PIG DNA has come close. A contextual framework for DISCHARGE. The New Aesthetic ain't so new anymore, but this group is poppin' pixels to loosen their dirty arseholes, gleefully crossing the line into total noize war. It would be entirely possible for a band like this to stumble a bit, faced with the big boy 12" format, but it does not drag for a second, or turn into pastiche like many bands that worship at the altar of Kawakami can sometimes do. Somewhere in the '90s punk-anarchy got coopted by hair-shirted wankers, but PIG DNA has officially pressed reset. No future / utopia now.

DOWNTOWN BOYS – *Full Communism* LP (Don Giovanni)
Actually, fuck. Talking of street gangs with analysis. Here's a group who's got that vibe down so well that they almost don't need the music. The songs would feel secondary to their clear-eyed, full-hearted political approach, if each one weren't so totally joyful, irradiating light. What DOWNTOWN BOYS have clearly hit on in a way so many bands struggle with is how to be serious and still project fun. The gang you actually wanna join. Every song on this record has a precise message about power and capital under it that resonates for a generation of punks who've come up through an era of unprecedented irony. Part of how you do that, it seems, is by writing screaming anthems against police brutality while naming your debut full-length after a leftist internet meme, or songs that target oppression that are punctuated by a toot toot of a bright, unapologetic saxophone. *Full Communism* is polemic from the hips and it is so, so necessary. A molotov aflame in a deep dark night already devoid of stars.

TERRY – *Talk About Terry* EP (Upset the Rhythm)
Few bands produce one truly perfect song. TERRY have just formed and done it, two and a half if not three times. I can't stop, can you? This is sunny, janglin' doldrums pop. Close mic my heart. TVPs by the sea. The three songs on this single could have been written in an afternoon, between cans of dollar beer, or crafted over months, they feel as easy and free as a smile. I suspect given the output of TERRY's attendant parts (AKA members of all the best Australian bands, from TOTAL CONTROL to CONSTANT MONGREL) it was probably the former, all the more a testament to the soft genius of all involved. That such warm and wide-eyed hopeful songs continue to trickle out of such a fucked continent is a message to us all. Try harder. Try Terry.

SHOPPING – *Why Choose* LP (FatCat)
This band is a triforce of queerio genius, and I think this second LP would sound like this whatever had happened, but what *has* happened is that a lot of people have heard of them now and they have a record deal (if that's even a thing these days) with a large indie label. This is exciting for every punk from London who's ever danced and cried with communal joy a bit at the same time during one of SHOPPING's many hundreds (literally) of gigs across this steaming turd of a capital. Diamonds in the shit. From the mirrored basement of Powerlunches (if you don't know now you never will, and may you thank the lord for your luck, she solemnly jests) to cities across America, SHOPPING have managed two full-lengths, which is more than most ever get to. *Why Choose* is just as much fuelled by the wild riffceptions of Rachel's genius as *Consumer Complaints* was, still an avalanche of deconstructed post-punk possibility, still wrought with killer spikes of nutty perfection where vocals work as instrument (ooh-oh-ooh-oh-ooh) that still sound nothing like anything except SHOPPING, but this is more than a stale continuation. It's the second coming, dickhead. Buy it now.

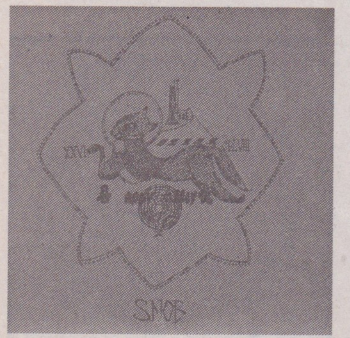
PIÑÉN – *Emancipación* EP (self-released)
PIÑÉÉÉÉÉÉÉN. I saw this band play twice in 2015 and they absolutely blew me away both times. The first time, in a squatted underground car park in Barcelona, I had the nervous poos pre-playing so badly that I thought my whole body was about to turn inside out, so these two

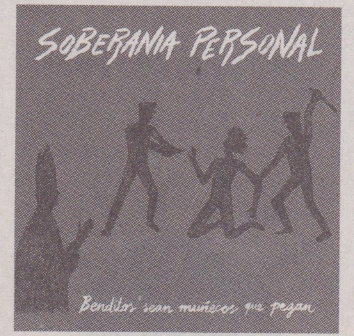
coming and doing the same to my brain was both terrifying and apt. I generally hate the world primitive, even when appropriate, because I think in a world of complex terror, being simple is actually really hard. Repetition as an art form. This is a set of beautiful, honest, highly evolved shouts into the abyss, flayed of fat and flesh, crucial to the future of humanity as our shameful skeletons. The screen-printed sleeve and super cool booklet works to elevate this thing further, a call to arms. *Liberación.*

SNOB – *Quit Your Job* EP (self-released)
Another slice of the pie from London's most productive power couples. SNOB carry on where they left off after their first single, with more propulsively repulsive bass, PENI-inflected clattering drums and spooky guitar, but the production on this banger is unstoppable, and the less crowded sequencing compared to their first effort gives each song its time to shine, louder. Daniel Husayn behind the ones and twos so it's no surprise. An interesting litter, trash, waste, refuse theme emerges from "Kick the Bin" and "Litter Lout", showing what a civic-ly minded bunch of respectable reprobates this lot are, but SNOB are the opposite of rubbish. Zing. The inchoate rage of the compassionate confronted by a world run by bad, bad, bastards. They're also a band that plays live with a strangely placid composure that seems to belie the gruesome sonic snot that shoots out of them. For a time I used to wish they'd explode a bit more to match, but here's the thing, which this record demonstrates: here's a band completely in control, beyond the need for any visual distraction. Everyone is depraved inside. Here are some nasty, dark songs they wrote about horrible everyday shit. No frills, or spikes needed. Copies still around if you need it. You do.

MOZART – *The Tick* CS (self-released)
San Francisco's been doomed for a bloody long time. Bands operating in that locale have sometimes seemed imprisoned by their own rich history, stuck in the frame of reference, always catching themselves in the mirror, can't quite leave the house. Marissa and co. have taken this self-reflexive puzzle, stamped on that mirror and rolled around in the shards 'til the disco ball of blood and confusion fees like a brand new subjectivity. Who cares what city this is, anyway? Peninsula of Fuckery. Claustrophobic basement screams and unrelenting one-two drums punctuate each of the seven tracks here, led by dirty, clanging "punch the guitar" style riffs that recall the dark looming gravity of bands like NOG WATT, pushing them into new and unsettling alien energies. The songs never quite keep pace with expected nod-along safety, lurching around inconclusively, teaching you the fear. A testament to the weird charm of the punk demo as timeless form, a new universe to sit with every time.

SOBERANÍA PERSONAL – *Benditos Sean Muñecos Que Pegan* LP (Metadona)
I don't normally go in too hard with the reissues here, but this record, previously unknown to me, was on the top of my now playing pile for long enough that it warrants a mention. SOBERANÍA PERSONAL is addictive listening! Pummeling Argentinian hardcore punk, straightforward phasey guitar fights with occasional bizarre crypto-funky bass breaks (not joking), charming pogo under suddenly bluesy solos, straight into almost MOTÖRHEAD-y riffs which could approach black metal under a different production treatment. Schizophrenic and completely addictive, while invective proclamations about state suppression, political grandstanding and religious bigotry (so far as punk-level-2 Spanish allows me) grip you by the throat. A band that sounds like the thing they were into most was being a band, cramming in a hundred different ways to play, a hundred different feelings into every song, so listening in via this beautifully produced reissue is every bit infectiously fun and wild as it sounds.





FIREWALKER – Demo CS (Failure)
The first few years of my gig-going life involved a hell of a lot of capital H hardcore. Had a varsity jacket and a bleach chelsea cut and was beholden to "truisms" upheld by a sort of Dad's Army of gatekeeping camo bores, older men who'd insist girls "look stupid moshing / just sound 'wrong.'" What I mean is that I heard MADBALL before I heard CRASS, and I would still throw you out a window to *Ball of Destruction*. Feel me. As you can imagine, this demo tape from Boston's FIREWALKER, fronted by a woman who sounds like an actual fucking 33RPM legit Monster, set my world alight a bit. The riffs and pace bring to mind the RAW DEAL demo or a lost cut from the *New Breed* comp; the lyrics, delivered Paul Bearer-style (from the throat, covered in spit) are the absolute sickest, my wet dream of feminist crew ideology. *"We're half the population and we're sicker than you / sick of all this shit that you put us through / twice as angry, twice as fed up too / mentally tough, twice as tight like glue."* So hard, so real. Psyched for the existence of this band and the next generation of tough birds roundly telling whoever's doing the gatekeeping this time round to get the fuck out the way, or just laugh in their face, grab the mic, and mosh right over it.

CAMYLLE REYNOLDS *is a reviewer for* MRR.

I'm a reviewer for *Razorcake*, vocalist for B.D./BAD DADDIES, the new bassist for the MIDNITE SNAXX, fitness instructor, substitute teacher, mother of two boys, and now working towards getting my teaching credentials and master's. Short and sweet and in no particular order:

VIOLENCE CREEPS – *On My Turf* EP (VeeCee) and "I'm Broke/ Gridlock" flexi 7" (Degenerate)
NOTS – "Virgin Mary/Shelf Life" 45 (Goner)
MIDNITE SNAXXX – "Don't Wake Me Up/Pull Down the Shades" 45 (Total Punk)
BADLANDS – "Dark/Dreams" 45 (Porchcore)
COLD BEAT – *Into the Air* LP (Crime on the Moon)
BIKINI KILL – *Revolution Girl Style Now* LP (Bikini Kill)
MANIAC – *Demimonde* LP (La-Ti-Da)
PLASTIX – *Ich Bin Modern* LP (Danger)
G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)
SHOPPING – *Why Choose* LP (FatCat)

Honorable Mentions, live: G.L.O.S.S. with NO STATIK at the Oakland Metro / TOTAL CONTROL at the Knockout / QUAALUDES every time / WIZARD APPRENTICE at Think and Die Thinking Fest in San Jose / UFFIZI at the Church / SHOPPING and FLESH WORLD at the Knockout.

CAROLYN KEDDY *is a reviewer for* MRR, *a long-time advocate for independent radio, and our film columnist.*

Every year when I scrawl my very long list of potential best records of the year, I can't help but think of those people who hold on to that notion that there no new bands that are making good music any more. Time to get your heads out of your asses and listen to these great records.

THE WAVE PICTURES – "I Could Hear The Telephone (3 Floors Above Me)/Walking on the Water" 45 (Moshi Moshi)
"I Could Hear The Telephone (3 Floors Above Me)" is the catchiest song of the year. So far I have listened to it five million times and I never tire of it. The B-side has Billy Childish on vocals. It is a sincere ballad called "Walking On The Water." It's nice, but the A-side kills.

RAW PONY – "Bo Diddley/Shattered" 45 (Heel Turn)
Yes, this Pony is raw. RAW PONY cranks out some tough trashy garage rock. Both songs are distorted and nasty in all the best ways. Plus they are really catchy. Fantastic.

CHROME REVERSE – *Yeah, Yeah, We Are…* EP (Mag Wheels)
Catchy garage punk with a rockabilly beat. It's part '60s, part '90s. Sounds like the soundtrack for a trashy '60s exploitation flick. Fantastic vocals by Lili Zeller.

SUN BATHER – "ZZZZ/Roden Til Alt Ondt" 45 (Hjernespind)
This record has such an attitude. It's like they are not even trying, yet the music that comes out is so driving and catchy. It grabbed me on the first listen and hasn't let go.

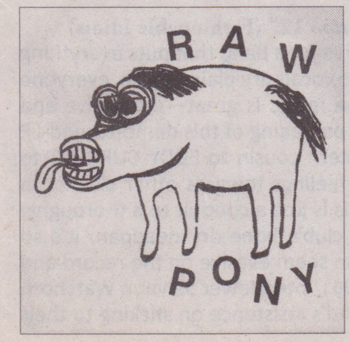
JOHNNY MOPED – "Ain't No Rock N Roll Rookie/Super Woofa" 45 (Damaged Goods)
I am as shocked as anyone that I would put a reunion record on my list. It's been twenty-five years since these guys released new music. I kept hearing "Ain't No Rock 'N' Roll Rookie" on Cambridge, MA's WMBR radio. The first few times I had to ask who it was. Probably because it wouldn't sink in that it was JOHNNY MOPED. The B-side "Super Woofa" is equally great. Plus their documentary *Basically, Johnny Moped* is on my Top Ten film list.

MARY BELL – *Vultures* EP (Danger)
Frantic and panicky post-punkish garage rock. Whereas the boys of the '10s seem to be all fuzzy and nice, the girls are bashing stuff and thrashing about. The music of MARY BELL is fun, interesting and exciting. This record is so cool.

FLEABITE – *TTYL* EP (Puzzle Pieces)
This record is kind of unassuming. It is simple lo-fi punk. The songs are catchy. The vocals are sweet. Yet, there is something a bit off that puts you on edge. Better keep your eyes on FLEABITE.

LIME CRUSH – *Graveyard* EP (Fettkakao)
This record has such an early punk attitude. It is catchy and dance-y, shouted call and response vocals with harmonies over simple catchy tunes. It's like some lost post-punk from the early '80s. Fun stuff.

BLACK ABBA – "Betting On Death/Civilized" 45 (Goner)
I really like dirty keyboard music. The more distorted the better. The keyboard itself always lends a peppy, up attitude to a song even when the lyrics don't. BLACK ABBA gets it right.



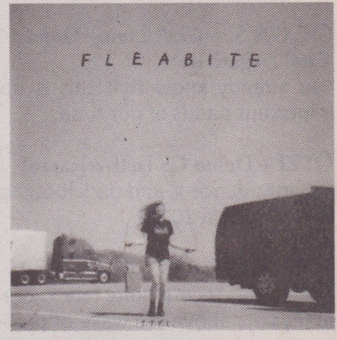
HIEROPHANTS – *Parallax Error* LP (Aarght! / Goner)
A fun combo of '60s English garage rock meets Flying Nun and K Records done by an Australian band. It hits enough chords of weird with a bit of cute.

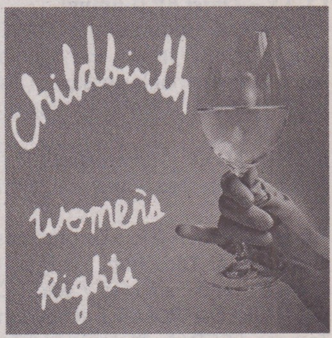
TIME – *Aerial Gobs Of Death* LP (Förbjudna Ljud)
The title alone makes me laugh. It's also nice that the music is so distorted and wild sounding. It's kind of dreamy if your dreams are nightmares. I love it.

CHILDBIRTH – *Women's Rights* LP (Suicide Squeeze)
This album is really silly and of course that's fun. The song "Nasty Grrls" should be an anthem for girls everywhere. Calling us nasty? We'll show you how nasty we are. Also writing a response song to "Who Let The Dogs Out?" in 2015 might not seem like a good idea on paper, but CHILDBIRTH manages to pull it off.

DON HOWLAND – *Life Is a Nightmare* LP (12XU)
The description blues-punk mostly makes me cringe, but DON HOWLAND just does something so nice with the style. The songs on this LP are so catchy with the right amount of attitude. The recording is lo-fi, but powerful. It just sounds great.

Honorable mentions: SEX CRIME – *I Am An Observer* EP / MIDNITE SNAXXX – "Don't Wake Me Up/Pull Down the Shades" 45 (Total Punk) / BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – *Streets of Rage* LP / the ACHTUNGS – *Welcome to Hell* LP / the JINXES – "Mosquitoes/Oh Yeah" 45





DAN GOETZ *is a reviewer and radio DJ for* MRR.

Another (figuratively) wasted year, another batch of punk records that helped it go down.

STRESS SS – *Fest* EP (Adult Crash)
The vocalist of INFERNÖH goes solo, and it's fucking beautiful. My factually challenged review of this banger be damned, the TOTALITÄR comparisons are not hyperbolic.

Q – *Recqrd* EP (Lumpy)
This band played the best live hardcore set I've seen this decade in a Toronto basement, and their furious, blown-out brand of early '80s style hardcore holds up here.

CONEHEADS – *L.P.1 Aka 14 Year Old High School PC-Fascist Hype Lords Rip Off Devo For The Sake Of Extorting $$$ From Helpless Impressionable Midwestern Internet Peoplepunks* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / International Players Club)
Let the extorting begin! This thing now sells for $70 on Discogs dot com. I also hear elements of the first RUDIMENTARY PENI EP amidst the stiff freakiness.

EXIT ORDER – *Take the Bait* EP (Side Two)
Riff of the year goes to the verse of "Begging." A raging and varied enough hardcore EP deceptively wrapped in shimmering guitars.

MOZART – *The Tick* CS (self-released)
Pissed and freaky hardcore punk with the best guitar tone. If Marissa's screams don't make you feel something, you don't have a punk bone in your body.

G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)
You already know that this is one of the most raging, pointed, and important bands of our time.

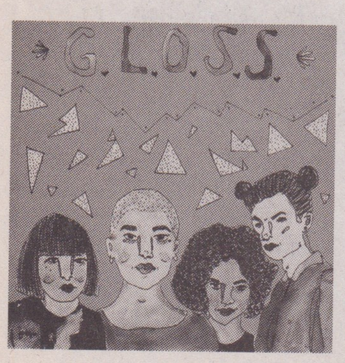
ÖTZI – Demo CS (self-released)
Dreamy, dance-y, and dark local post-punk with great trading-off vocals. New 7" out in 2016!

LONGINGS – 12" (Framework)
I heard this record quite late in the year, but its hooks and urgency put it many cuts above the wave of post-punk records of the last few years.

CCTV – *Quiet* EP (Lumpy)
Like fellow Hoosiers the CONEHEADS, they have a sound that's simultaneously freaky and rigid, and vocals that are amazing yet don't seem quite humanly possible. I also hear a subtle thread of DOW JONES AND THE INDUSTRIALS running through this band.

CØNDITIØN – *Actual Hell* 12" (Iron Lung)
This band reaches a new songwriting apex on this LP.

Top ten live sets: Q in a Toronto basement / VEXX at the Church, Oakland / BIG ZIT at Oldschool Pizzeria, Olympia / G.L.O.S.S. in Oakland, SF, Olympia, and San Jose / MYSTIC INANE in NYC and Oakland / UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE at Soybomb, Toronto / EXIT ORDER at Soybomb, Toronto / CCTV in Olympia and Toronto / DAME at Soybomb, Toronto / NANDAS in NYC and Toronto



ELI WALD *is the distribution coordinator of* MRR.

I started working as the distribution coordinator of this magazine at the beginning of the year, and it's been busy as hell! (Besides working here I play in bands including TSA, MOZART, and KISS CAM and do a label called Melters. On top of all that I pursue my real career as a Door Guy). I was worried I wouldn't have time to stay on top of all the music coming through this house, but looking back there are definitely a lot more than ten records that I got to spend some real quality time with. The ones listed here are some records and songs I felt particularly compelled to write about. They are not ranked. I don't trust my own faculties of memory well enough to even consider this a definitive list of my own favorites. That said, I'll go to bat for the following:

HOME BLITZ – *Foremost & Fair* LP (Richie Records)
Daniel DiMaggio is a rare one: a genius in our shitty midst. I'm not sure how to introduce, let alone describe HOME BLITZ. "Two Steps" was a song I heard for the first time maybe six years ago, a favorite track from their last LP and as good an introduction to the band as you could ask for. This record has a complex history and personality of its own, and makes for a more difficult getting-to-know-you period. But make no mistake; this long-awaited LP is a perfect piece of craftsmanship, a Swiss timepiece of a record. It's a record with *tracks* ("I'm that Key", "Downtown", "Horrorshow" each play by some wildly florid power pop rules before completely detonating in on themselves) and a record that justifies the full-length as a format. Rarely does an LP chart any kind of narrative and thematic arc so successfully. It finds success not in going about things subtly but rather in going *all the way in*, getting weirder and deeper than even the most poorly adjusted HOME BLITZ fan thought this one might go. Maybe in twenty years people will reflect on the detour this record takes (veering between early Renaissance music to suitcase tape manipulation) the way they talk about *My War* or *On the Beach* or other (in)famous B-sides. Only time will tell.

MYSTIC INANE – *Eggs Onna Plate* EP (Lumpy) and *Ode to Joy* EP (Negative Jazz)
It's fucked up how good these records are. Everything is firing off the cylinders: twisting bass and guitar lines recalling SACCHARINE TRUST and SPIKE IN VAIN, the tracks of BOBBY SOXX worship, arrangements that will straight up break the ankles of all the creepycrawlers in the pit, the out-of-time dry-heaving vocal delivery throughout. Last time I checked some members of the band had left their home of New Orleans, as for a band this good to stay together in the same city would be truly rude and unfair to everyone lurching along. A lot of people may have narrow ideas of what hardcore means, but this is some fucked up music from that doesn't fit any other bill. This is hardcore punk, get used to it.

URANIUM CLUB – *Human Exploration* 12" (Fashionable Idiots)
URANIUM CLUB seems strangely evasive for a band that puts everything on the table. The recording is clean, the vocals are plainspoken, everyone is well-mannered enough. In fact, the music is great—propulsive and inviting. Without probing the lyrics or packaging of this demo-turned-LP it's straight-up great punk, a Midwestern cousin to EDDY CURRENT to these ears but sure to evoke tender feelings towards other classics in others. It's catchy as hell, but all of this is just a conduit to a thoroughly imagined reality conjured up in the club's bone-dry deadpan. It's so thoroughly imagined that the band can seem evasive on the record and in conversation. In our very pages (#391), interviewer Shivaun Watchorn seemed to get frustrated with the band's insistence on sticking to their

story. The band pointed out that this is just one way to take control of your own output. What's so strange about a real Midwestern band backed by a fake Southwestern chemicals conglomerate? The Sunbelt Corporation clubhouse is just as real as the Philadelphia or Brooklyn practice space of some band giving *Noisey* or *Rolling Stone* the all-access pass video tour and playing ball when probed for their "rawest" tour story. You don't necessarily have to be smarter or cleverer than everyone to control your narrative out here in the desert of the real; you just have to put in the work.

CCTV – *Quiet* EP (Lumpy)
Real joy is hard to come by, and lasting joy is especially rare. The music on this record is still great, even after making the journey from embedded MP3 to tape to vinyl since I first heard it last summer. These songs sound carefree, but I guess "joy" is a strange word to sum up this record: the songs are about anxiety, paranoia, psychological manipulation. But maybe that's why these songs are so compulsively listenable, as opposed to songs about friendship or swimming in the lake in the summer or something. Seasons change, but the subjects of this record are going to be around for a while; this is the sound of transcending all that.

PURE DISGUST – "I.D.O.Y.S." on their *Chained* EP (Katorga Works / QCHQ)
Out of the three-sided FURY long-sleeve tee set (i.e. any band that played America's Hardcore Fest), PURE DISGUST released my favorite record of the year. At some point I thought to myself, "Wow, this is the first capital-H-hardcore record I've heard in a long time where I am actually stoked to sing along to any track." Obviously a lot of that is about the content: not many hardcore records coming through *MRR*'s mail bins have songs about the racism of the drug war and the carceral state, cultural appropriation, etc. But hardcore is also about delivery, a subject that reviewers including myself have under-evaluated in talking about this band. The track opening up this record really reveals this band's talents. The song is about refusing to do white people's emotional and intellectual labor as a person of color, which seems like a more difficult subject to turn into a pit anthem than "brotherhood." But musically and lyrically, it works: *"I DON'T OWE YOU SHIT."*

NO – "Run Dry" on *Treating People Like They Don't Exist* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
NO was a band that already excelled in slamming the brakes on a riff or catapulting it to another register. Sadly it was a band I only got to experience on record, but that alone was pretty satisfying. I don't know how they made their guitar sound the way it does—maybe each string was recorded separately, maybe this band actually knows how to use a chorus pedal. *Treating People Like They Don't Exist* continues in the same rubric laid out in their first two 12"s, totally deranged shifts in tempo recalling later WRETCHED material and similar outer space production. Then suddenly at the end of side A, this track comes down to Earth and just levels everything. Something about the riff that opens and closes "Run Dry" sounds vaguely familiar in that impossible to place kind of way. It could have been left on the cutting room floor of a session for *Finira Mai?* as easily as *Thou Shalt Not Kill*. Who cares? You're moshing. This band really had a way with sequencing, one of the very select few to whom we could entrust the task of composing a hardcore punk 12". They will be missed.

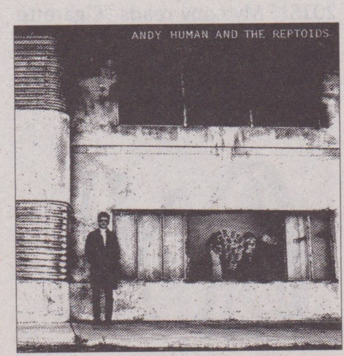
SNEAKS – CS (Sister Polygon)
There's so much depth to this music: somewhere between ESG and YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS as far as composition, a sparse and minimal groove with an impeccable sense of timing. SNEAKS is a one-woman band and each song is composed with just bass, vocals, and a drum machine. Every track is like a painting made up of a few confident strokes, where the painter knows exactly when the work is done. A friend recently told me that in a perfect world, all museums would be free so that you could go in and look at one painting for maybe two minutes tops, then go back out into the city. I think in the same world all songwriters would have the sense of composition that carries this cassette.

IVY – *A Cat's Cause, No Dogs Problem* EP (Katorga Works)
Some people look at New York City and see an all-style no-substance town. Believe it or not, there were some sick tracks there in 2015 and IVY were responsible for more than their share of them. Somehow this EP is even more taut and catchy overall than their near-perfect 12" from last year. "Cave Business" opens up this record with the kind of chromatic riff that sounds like the genius that comes from someone approaching an instrument for the first time. These are four songs that you'll be able to remember and puzzle over years down the line. Except for the ROLLING STONES, all bands must eventually break up, and IVY was no exception to this sad rule. At least we have the continued output of KALEIDOSCOPE and JJ DOLL to look forward to.

ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – "I Got Soul" on their self-titled LP (S-S)
The signature song on ANDY HUMAN's debut LP with the REPTOIDS, a bedroom vision turned back alley reality. It's an excessive track; guitar harmonies and sax are pushed all the way to the front, with Andy's lyrical sentiments at dead center. It's probably the best reaction to the kind of excess you see walking down the street in these times, whether it's the new Amazon campus opening next to your practice space or someone casually walking off BART and onto a hoverboard. Fight fire with fire, you know? In my review of the record I think I compared it to *Rock n Roll Animal*, just to convey the image of the ALICE COOPER BAND turning the lens back on to punk from a place of experience and technical proficiency. Both those things are overrated in my opinion, but I'm not altogether opposed if they end up in the right hands.

V/A – *Ohio's Greatest Obscenities* CS (Cretun)
This bootleg cassette comp was compiled by Emmy Ramone—sometime *MRR* columnist and editor of current and future fanzine brilliance of *Cretins of Distortion* and the *Mental Whiff*—as a companion piece to the seventh volume of COD. That zine itself should rightly top year-end lists strictly dedicated to printed media. It features an exhaustive catalog of Ohio punk from the mid '70s to the mid '80s in addition to a couple of longer interviews with the likes of Ron House, Mike Rep, and Robert Griffin. The tape itself is something like a modern *Bloodstains Across the Midwest*, but more relentlessly specific in its focus (it's all Ohio, baby) and epic in its scope. I got my copy sent to me shortly before the aux cable in the van gave out, and as such this has been my soundtrack to navigating the brittle capillaries of this bullshit metropolis and the clogged arteries of the I-5 alike. Because this tape is long and kind of quietly dubbed and because I have a short and fucked up attention span I'd kind of space out for stretches of listening to this. Then suddenly I'd come back to, and there's the DARK, there's GREAT PLAINS, there's the JAZZ DESTROYERS or STARVATION ARMY. The mix that keeps on giving; my introduction to HUMAN SWITCHBOARD and OUTERWEAR, what might have been my TSA bandmates' first time hearing "Agitated" before I made them give me an ELECTRIC EELS tattoo. It's an overwhelming dose of the antidote to everything I hate. Somehow you can play this on the way home from the most bogus bar gig in the Bay Area and still have a reason to say to yourself "Punk is the best." I'm not sure if this is the kind of thing that pulls people into punk (the rest of TSA made me turn off "Rocket to Nowhere"), but it is the oxygen that those of us who are in too deep desperately need.

ELEVEN MORE TRACKS THAT FUCKED UP THE VIBE IN 2015: G.L.O.S.S. – "Masculine Artifice" / VACANT LIFE – "Clairvoyant"/ FRAU – "EBD" / VIAL – "You're Not Safe" / FLESH WORLD – "Poolside Boys" / the WORLD – "I Got It" / PATSY – "Tuley Tude High" / OBNOX – "Grease" / NOTS – "Virgin Mary" / VEXX – "Black and White" / BRANDO'S ISLAND – "Auto Warfare"



EMMY RAMONE *is a columnist for* MRR *and publishes the superior fanzines* Cretins of Distortion *and* The Mental Whiff.

What's a Top Ten worth in a culture that hates hierarchies? What do I know, most of the records I had intended for this list I found came out last year and all I ended up with were records and tapes that friends made. I guess what I'm saying is I'm not much of a Top Ten punk. I don't keep up with hot commodities like a lot of the punk these days demand. There's nothing wrong with that; I just don't think I move as fast as the current. If you're looking for a clue, I don't have one, but here are ten bands that I think transcend my bias and my thoughts on them. Enjoy.

TENEMENT – *Predatory Headlights* 2xLP (Don Giovanni)
A massive double disc record that ventures and explores many depths of one of the best songwriting outfits going in any genre of contemporary music. Writing a simple blurb of this record is a joke. Last time I reviewed this it took over a whole page of my zine. It shows heavy strokes in soul, punk, jazz, noise, and pop. It is all over the place while managing to stay cohesive throughout each flip. A-side track "The Shriveled Finger: America's Graven Image" has to be one of my favorite songs they ever released.

MYSTIC INANE – *Eggs Onna Plate* EP (Lumpy)
Everyone makes straightforward catchy riffs to play over obvious drumbeats. Finally, a band writes songs with more purpose beyond encouraging "slamming"? Of course it's in my Top Ten. In my opinion too much punk depends on what you see on the surface. MYSTIC INANE presents its songs both musically and lyrically in a way that has layers and routes that give you a reason to actually pay attention and think about something. It's refreshing.

IVY – *A Cat's Cause, No Dogs Problem* EP (Katorga Works)
One of the many great bands that tragically ended this year, IVY's final 7" has the same anxious drumming and frantic guitars that we saw on their past efforts. The sounds that IVY brings to the surface and the sounds they pound in the background constantly wave back and forth without ever properly intertwining, leaving them with a distorted sound unlike other punk bands. This time it winds in and out wilder, and in a different fashion. It goes through my brain back and forth, distorting itself in a way that feels like it's underwater or something. I wouldn't say it feels psychedelic, though. It's anxious and brute; I feel more like I'm concussed then I am tripping out.

URANIUM CLUB – *Human Exploration* 12" (Fashionable Idiots)
A truly fantastic LP from this conceptually conscious corporate rock band. The songs have a smooth sonic sound to them with hilarious lyrics that are delivered with a generous amount of both snark and swank. This band shows similarities to bands like DEVO, WRANGLER BRUTES, and the DEAD MILKMEN but they never land on one focused point, transcending their influences and making real exciting music.

CCTV – *Quiet* EP (Lumpy)
This record is a real ray of light in a world where punxploitation is valued over things truly new and exciting. This Indiana band plays a style of music that best fits with Rough Trade style art punk, post-punk whatever. Everyone says "This record sounds like it was recorded in a basement in 1979" but I'll bet in 1979 they would've been saying "This sounds like it was recorded in a basement in 2015!" My copy reads "Cigarette Consumers Try Vaporizers" which I really love. I think almost all six hundred copies in the first press have a unique name, or at least a stamp pattern. Can you imagine how much better the shit in this magazine would be if every band put that kind of effort into their shit? I hope the next record I get from them says "CODY COUGHED TOKING VAPES."

THE OINTMENT – Demo CS (self-released)
Fantastic tripped-out rock and roll from Portland. Like Pere Ubu's *Modern Dance*, THE OINTMENT fuses catchy danceable rock'n'roll music with wild art (or dada) punk. THE OINTMENT plays music driven by clean guitars and bouncing synthesizers, then overlays that with slurred words and computer sounds beeping and modulating endlessly. I think THE OINTMENT picks up where all the Northeast Ohio bands of the early '70s were heading before New Wave really caught on. Outstanding!

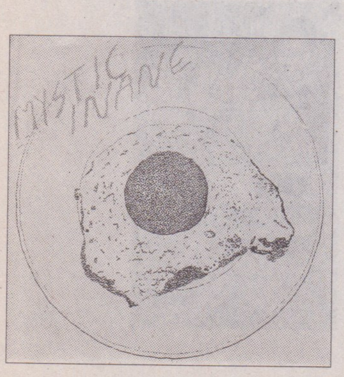
UROCHROMES – *Get In Line 4 Mental Decline* CS (Gut Freak)
A urochrome is the bile pigment in urine that gives it that yellow color and if punk is piss, UROCHROMES are that yellow tint. Their demo is the catchiest hardcore punk I've heard all year! It's hit after hit, with strong riffs layered tightly over a distorted drum machine and the hilarious lyrics are delivered in an overly abrasive method. "Very WMASS hardcore."

BLANK SPELL – *Malign Eye* 7" (Cruel Noise / Trabuc / World Gone Mad)
Fast, anxious, and inward punk music from Philadelphia. A band that plays at punishing speeds and with overwhelming levels of aggression, yet each song is given a dark and eerie edge by its pounding drums and curdling shrieks. I feel this band took the "dark" elements of punk a lot of bands in America have really debased and transcended the term by picking up where Philly band SICKOIDS left off in a way, playing these sounds harder and more interesting than previously attempted. Their song "Night Mute" is absolutely pulverizing, with spastic spirals and commanding hooks.

HAIR LONG AND FREEKY – *V.1* CS (self-released)
This tape has smooth guitar, cool drum machine, and horrendously cheesy keyboard tones played out at calm pace. Atop it sit spoken word with lines like "I'm a cockroach if you know what I mean / 'what do you mean?'" A really smooth sounding cassette! Probably the smoothest cassette of 2015!

GOLDMAN SEX BATALION – *Goldman's Beat* CS (Records Inc.)
Indiana punk with a primitive sound and energy. I could say GSB sounds like a lot of bands but it's really nothing but solid punk, lacking bells and whistles yet remaining uncontrived. The last song on the tape, "Telephone Bore," is the hit though. The J card actually reads "SIX HARD ONES AND A POP SONG!" This is the pop song and it's just great, like a more practiced TELEVISION PERSONALITES. I want to dub this song onto a tape over and over and throw it in the Walkman and go for a long walk.

Honorable mention: I've heard things by NEUTRAL FIXATION II (WMass) and THE WORLD (Oakland) that are worthy of Top Ten treatment but lack a proper release yet. MYSTIC INANE and TENEMENT had other Top Ten-worthy records but I thought it'd be cheesy to double up like that. Reissues cost way too much but I bet if I could afford them they'd be on this list a lot. Shit, even new records cost too much. Used records win my spot as top number one thing in 2015. All fanzines are cooler than all websites.



ERIKA ELIZABETH *is an* MRR *columnist and the host of* Expressway to Yr Skull *radio.*

I got asked to do my first-ever *MRR* year-end Top Ten last year and was really excited about being included, but the deadline unfortunately wound up coinciding with losing my job and essentially being thrown into a state of all-consuming stress and depression that prevented me from doing any functional human being things. I threw a list together at the last minute, couldn't get my shit together to do any sort of commentary and felt all kinds of embarrassment and shame about it. Thankfully, 2015 has been much more productive than the procession of disappointment that was 2014. I started doing a monthly column here, and the anxiety of impending deadlines has been slowly loosening its grip on me. I started a band in early spring, and not only have we not self-destructed yet (none of my past bands have ever survived for more than six months), but we started recording a demo a few weeks ago and will hopefully start doing real band shit in the new year. And I actually finished this Top Ten list in a relatively timely manner this time (with actual context, no less).

I'm sticking to a singles-only rule with this one—they're concise, they're direct, and I think I just bought more of them than their longer format counterparts this year anyway. Also, no reissues, and I'm limiting this list to records that I haven't already written about in my column, because I want to avoid the pressure of trying to say something completely new or winding up just totally repeating myself. Here's ten of 2015's best singles, in alphabetical order. You'll see that the ladies really dominated shit this year (duh, of course they did).

AQUARIAN BLOOD – *Savage Mind* EP (Goner)
Starting with the piercing sound of one of those old gym teacher whistles, "Savage Mind" is a two-minute rollercoaster of blown-out, lo-fi synth-punk, as Laurel Ferdon and JB Horrell (both of MOVING FINGER; she used to be in NOTS, he's currently in EX-CULT) kick dirt all over the place with their call-and-response vocals, energetically shrieked and delivered in a deep monotone, respectively. A-side follow-up "Come Unglued" is the real knockout here, though, with mega-distorted squalls of violin and Ferdon's desperate yell creating a sense of agitated claustrophobia that's more haunting than pretty much anything that I heard from a self-proclaimed "dark" post-punk band this year.

BLACK ABBA – "Betting On Death/Civilized" 45 (Goner)
Two songs of the endearingly scrappy no-fi DIY noise-pop variety that seems to have largely fallen off the radar since TIMES NEW VIKING's Siltbreeze Records days (y'know, like ten years ago). "Betting on Death" and "Civilized" both share that band's affinity for tunelessly hollered female vocals, wobbly and distorted synth, and off-kilter hooks not quite obscured by a sound quality hovering somewhere around "recorded inside of a trashcan," but let's be clear, because these are all assets and BLACK ABBA are honestly doing TIMES NEW VIKING better than TIMES NEW VIKING are these days.

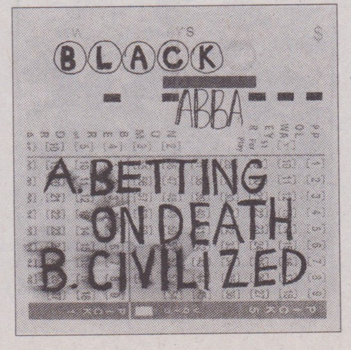
CCTV – *Quiet* EP (Lumpy)
Does this one even really need any explanation? There's a good reason why the first pressing of this single sold out in what seemed like a matter of hours, following the tidal wave of hype and anticipation that resulted from the perpetual reblogging of "Mind Control" (included here) back when it only existed as an audio stream on Tumblr. If there's been one recent trend that I've embraced openly, it's the shift in a certain subsection of the weirdo DIY underground away from hardcore and toward *Hardcore Devo,* and based on how many people collectively flipped their shit about CCTV, I think the kids are into it, too. It's frantic, it's minimal, it's precise, there's deadpan female vocals, and it all sounds like a third-generation cassette dub (possibly left out on someone's car dashboard to warp in the heat) of lost demos from some subterranean Midwestern post-punk band circa the early '80s raised on a steady diet of DOW JONES AND THE INDUSTRIALS and everyone's favorite spuds from Akron. But you all knew that already.

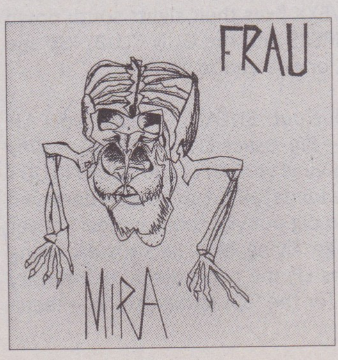
FRAU – *Mira* EP (self-released)
FRAU have been getting more and more vicious with each new release, taking the flashes of the boy-girl revolutionary sounds of early-to-mid '90s Slampt Records that marked their 2013 demo and sharpening them into the gnarled and noisy spurts of raw punk anger found on last year's *Punk Is My Boyfriend* 7". This single finds them more jagged and incendiary than ever. "Mira" launches straight into some disorienting No Wave barbed-wire guitar that's closer to TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS than HUGGY BEAR and each time vocalist Ash spits out her lines in "EBD," it's like she's sinking her teeth in deeper to rip the flesh clean from your bones. Pure seething hate in 7" format.

LIME CRUSH – *Graveyard* EP (Fettkakao)
Ramshackle, co-ed ruckus from Vienna, Austria showcasing the sort of off-kilter post-punk stutter with a tangled melodic heart that can be traced directly back to the likes of KLEENEX/LILIPUT, their spiritual antecedents across the border in Switzerland. There's ecstatic girl-gang vocals, lyrics focused on such seemingly dada concerns as playing ping pong (on the gleefully messy art-punk thrasher "Honk Tonk"), and the kind of see-saw guitar lines and crashing drumbeats that have been passed down through the ages from well-loved late '70s/early '80s Rough Trade singles, the sound of a band almost genetically engineered to win me over.

MIDNITE SNAXXX – "Don't Wake Me Up/Pull Down the Shades" 45 (Total Punk)
Somewhere between NIKKI AND THE CORVETTES' rebellious power pop streak and the cool garage-rock snarl of THEE HEADCOATEES, you'll find MIDNITE SNAXXX. Bad attitude girls covering an underrated New Zealand class of '77 classic ("Pull Down the Shades" by THE ENEMY and later, TOY LOVE) basically spells out a guaranteed a spot in my Top Ten. Their interpretation takes all of the snotty, three-chord punk rage of the original and adds the trademark MIDNITE SNAXXX switchblade-toting sock-hop sass; totally killer. "Don't Wake Me Up" is just as great, throwing a bit of a curveball as they give their usual bubblegum-punk leanings a frenetic ANGRY ANGLES-ish edge. Two songs in three minutes, no fucking around.

NOTS – "Virgin Mary/Shelf Life" 45 (Goner)
Two years ago, almost to the day, I reviewed NOTS' debut single (arguably my favorite 7" of 2013), where I might have called them "the evil triplet sisters of the URINALS," and I might have also referenced "skeletal KLEENEX-style post-punk". Those two specific compass points seemed to get thrown around pretty frequently when describing NOTS over the next year or so, while the band went from a three-piece to a four-piece and gradually outgrew most of those overt KLEENEX/URINALS influences, transitioning from the short and spiky lo-fi bashers on their first two singles to the darkly warped and hypnotic synth-punk territory

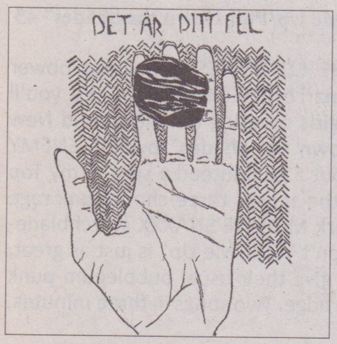




of last year's *We Are Nots* LP and now this monster single. "Shelf Life" harkens back to the band's more wiry and wired incarnation, but it's totally eclipsed by "Virgin Mary," which quickly locks into a repetitive bass/drums rhythmic loop, introducing bursts of strangled guitar, paranoid synth and Natalie Hoffman's wild echo-chamber vocals as the tension mounts. It's their best song yet, so whatever they come up with in 2016 will really melt some minds.

RED RED KROVVY – *Global Citizen* **EP (Helta Skelta)**
Australian neo-KBD punk stripped down to the bare basics: choppy slashes of guitar, pummeling no-frills drums, and devastatingly uncompromising vocals from frontwoman Ash. She rattles off a list of bound-to-fail resolutions ("Will you try to lose weight? Will you try to smoke less? Will you try to love yourself more?") in "New Year" with a disgusted, cynical sneer, while her bandmates bash out some sludgy noise that sounds like the GERMS if they'd been able to transcend time and space to have a few JESUS LIZARD LPs in their collections. It's ugly and fucked-up stuff, and honestly, the perfect sort of sentiment to include on a year-end list where I futilely try to reduce twelve months worth of music into ten representative, easy-to-digest entries with commentary—what's the point when we're all doomed anyway, y'know?

SHITFUCKS – *Det Är Ditt Fel* **7" (Rör Du Så Dör Du Skivproduktion)**
Squarely rooted in the tradition of no-budget punk primitivism spawned by dozens of *Killed By Death* and *Bloodstains Across* compilations, with the early '80s Dutch femme-punk band the NIXE in particular serving as a likely touchstone for this particular strain of shambling DIY commotion. Take some skeletal, scratchy guitar lines, a repetitive drum thud that seems perpetually at risk of stumbling over itself, and snotty, detuned female vocals (with occasional boy accompaniment) entirely in Swedish, delivered in six freewheeling spurts of two minutes or less, and you wind up with the giddily amateurish budget-punk brilliance of SHITFUCKS.



VEXX – *Give and Take* **EP (Katorga Works)**
I'm consistently blown away by Vexx's ability to pay tribute to the rich history of West Coast American punk (specifically the stretch from '77-'83 or so) that they're rooted in both in reckless spirit and by virtue of their Olympia origins, while never sounding like a rote throwback to some *Decline of Western Civilization* ideal. Vocalist Maryjane simultaneously evokes the gritty dramatics of Exene Cervenka circa X's golden period and the fierce, blistering delivery of Penelope Houston in the AVENGERS, with the band tempering much of the whiplash hardcore attack of their debut EP and settling into a more sinister mid-tempo slash and burn (see lead-off track "Black/White," where VEXX fixes their sights south down I-5 to channel faint echoes of the WIPERS and the GUN CLUB). Go see them live if you have the opportunity, or else you're a fool.

LPs and cassettes worth a quick shout out: SNEAKS – *Gymnastics* LP, TERRIBLE TRUTHS – LP, WIREHEADS – *Big Issues* LP, SHOPPING – *Why Choose* LP and the recently pressed-to-vinyl version of URANIUM CLUB's *Human Exploration* demo (Fashionable Idiots) all got some well-deserved words from me in this mag already. Go dig out your back issues! I never got around to mentioning the vintage Flying Nun Records-dreaming jangle of ZEBRA HUNTS' *The City Sighs* LP, the neo-post-punk intensity of NEGATIVE SCANNER's self-titled LP (or the '60s garage stomp-meets-'80s DIY messthetic of BLACK TIME's *Aerial Gobs of Love* LP, but they're just as great. If you're a fellow true believer who still owns a cassette deck, my highest recommendation goes to the demo tapes from LAIKA'S ORBIT, DAME, and UV-TV, plus the cassettes from the SHIFTERS, VITAL IDLES, POLIO CLUB, POSTURE, GAUCHE, and LITHICS that already received some love from me in print. Apologies to a million things from 2015 that I probably haven't heard yet.

FELIX HAVOC *writes a column for* MRR *and runs Havoc Records and Distribution.*

Another year has gone by, and again I was preoccupied with projects outside of underground music, meaning I probably missed a lot of what went on in the last year. I think back to my teens and 20s, when I was completely immersed in the world of demos, records, and shows. It's quite a contrast to the amount of time and energy I have to follow music today. That said, I comb the new release bins at Extreme Noise and do some buying and selling for my website, so I managed to hear a lot of new music in 2015, much of which I wasn't that into. Still, some outstanding records rose to the top of the pack and really blew me away. I feel like the two top labels in the world right now are Beach Impediment and D-Takt & Råpunk; both labels' output has been top-shelf in the last few years.

ABSOLUT / PARANOID – *Jawbreaking Mangel Devastation* **split 12" (Beach Impediment / Brain Solvent Propaganda)**
Absolut is pretty cool, but Paranoid is a devastating bomblast of pure hardcore power. I have been pumped up about this band since their demo tape. This new material is top-notch blazing hardcore influenced by Japanese crust, but it is still rooted in the tradition of pure Swedish hardcore. PARANOID released a 12" in 2015 as well, but that record compiles 7" and cassette tracks from 2014; otherwise it would've been in the second spot on this list.

HORRENDOUS – *War Is Still...* **12" (Brain Solvent Propaganda)**
This is another punishing Swedish rager. While I don't think this quite rises to the level reached by bands like INFERNÖH, HERÄTYS, or SKITKIDS, it's pretty awesome Swedish hardcore nonetheless.

AJAX – *Priced* **EP (Beach Impediment / Static Shock)**
This band's first two 7"s didn't really grab me, but this one is a monumental testament to the enduring power of hardcore. A crisp and powerful sound rooted in the past traditions of the genre, without sounding retro or generic. This is everything a hardcore 7" should be; it could hold its own in 1982, 1988, or today.

EXIT ORDER – *Take the Bait* **EP (Side Two)**
I gambled on this one just because the cover looked cool in the record bin. Great catchy hardcore with a really contemporary sound (flanged out guitar, etc.) but really compelling and memorable songs. You would normally get angry dude vocals with a band like this, but instead the female vocals really set it apart. It reminds me a bit of the vocal style of Julie from SIN 34 in that it's neither sing-y nor growly, just kind of a punky shout that perfectly rolls with the music.

PURE DISGUST – Chained EP (Katorga Works / QCHC)
PURE DISGUST, from my hometown of Washington, D.C., is probably the best band I saw all year. This EP is a perfect mix of UK82 and early hardcore sounds, representing everything that is pure and true in both genres.

KRÖMOSOM / NOMAD – split EP (Lengua Armada)
Could this be the last gasp of the golden age of noise not music? We must wait and see. Distorted raw punk on both sides.

LAPINPOLTHAJAT – *III* LP (Grind Your Mind / Havoc / Höhnie / Kämäset Leyvt / Papagájův Hlastel / Roku)
This LP features straightforward catchy Finnish hardcore punk in the tradition of LAMA and APPENDIX.

DISSEKERAD – *Mörket Tilltar* LP (Phobia)
Mörket Tilltar is the second LP from DISSEKERAD — a band that has inherited the mantle of TOTALITÄR — and is just a bulldozer assault of traditional Swedish hardcore punk.

CONCEALED BLADE – *Demo 2105* EP (Beach Impediment / Hardware)
This EP is as tough and brutal as a knife-fight in a prison weight room. The recording is a bit muddy, as I doubt anyone envisioned this coming out as a 7" when it was recorded as a demo, but I'm glad this raw and angry hardcore made it to vinyl.

KORSFÄST – *Ingen Ro För En Sliten Själ* 12" (D-Takt & Råpunk)
Ingen Ro För En Sliten Själ is the second LP from this band of Swedish hardcore veterans including Åke of MOB 47, and has the classic guitar sound and choppy riffs associated with Åke's earlier bands. Too bad this band seems to be on no one's radar in the U.S.

GRACE AMBROSE *is the content coordinator of* Maximum Rocknroll. *She plays guitar in MOZART.*

BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
2015, a dull knife omnipresent at our throats. You'll have to lean against it a little harder if you want to actually feel any pain. Late late capitalism has sucked the life out of me. I spend money on records as recreation, I celebrate tunneling through to a bottom of an inbox. It seems we all feel hopeless, helpless, rudderless, trapped in a march of productivity. No one is happy with where they lay their head, yet no one can think of a place where it seems viable to simply exist. Even Barcelona, that perfectly punk city of myth, is suffering. This record is sublime. A compact yet immense reaction to our suffocation. *Nihilismo* in the extreme still won't save us. Here there is pain in its failure, but also the deep pleasure that comes with contemplating the enormity of the attempt. Guitar sirens warn us of our impending demise. I'm grateful for the points where BARCELONA sticks us in what feels like a locked groove, those claustrophobic moments we can't seem to clamber out of, and equally thankful for the release found in the proximal familiar hardcore stomps. Is Catalan the most expressive of languages? All encompassing, unrelenting, *bomba*.

NO FORM – 12" (Muscle Horse / Reagent)
There's a television show in the UK called *Gogglebox*, made up of footage of people watching TV interspersed with clips from the shows they are watching. A premise so inane that there must be something more insidious about it. What kind of information are they gathering? And how will they use it against us? They say that at any given moment in central London you're being recorded by at least a dozen CCTV cameras. A clip of NO FORM playing on *Top of the Pops* appears on the TV. The studio audience is truly appalled. So are Sandy and Sandra, the ladies from Brixton, your favorite Goggleboxers. They don't like these Yorkshire boys. And why would they? This is music that is mostly unfit for human consumption, tormented and antisocial, thoroughly antagonistic and deeply unsettling, equal parts THROBBING GRISTLE and UNITED MUTATION. It certainly shouldn't be on national television. To you, though, it's an instant classic, like that footage of DIE KREUZEN on public access that you've watched a hundred times. You're absolutely delighted until suddenly you see yourself laughing along on the screen.

URANIUM CLUB – *Human Exploration* 12" (Fashionable Idiots)
Prior to the mid-20th century uranium existed only a by-product, with no commercial value. Today, all mined uranium ends up as either nuclear weapons or highly radioactive waste. It's a dangerous line of work, but war's no fairytale. It seems the Sunbelt Corporation has built a clubhouse for their Minneapolis-based employees and conscripted a musical group for entertainment at club functions. How kind! It's like the ping-pong table and bottomless keg at the SF tech firm, right? A game to 21 is a momentary respite from the insidious start-up exploitation reality; the taut, terse tunes of the MINNEAPOLIS URANIUM CLUB BAND distract from your imminent kidney failure. Counter-culture as corporate smokescreen, what else is new? We fall in line.

PIG DNA – *Mob Shity* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Here at *Maximum Rocknroll* we have a strict anti think-piece policy. See, we're too busy *living* punk to theorize it. Art schoolers, music bloggers, punk historians, rock criticizers: here's the door. If you've got a lengthy explanation for Understanding PIG DNA, you've missed the point. This is the perfect amalgam of noise and noize, songs barely visible through a haze of smoke. Confusion reigns supreme; they're laughing at you, not with you. I heard that there's about to be a DISCLOSE gig announced for April 17th. They finished programming the Randy and Chelsea holograms faster than they expected so they're moving on to Kawakami. I'll be at home with *Mob Shity* and Liquid Gold. "I know the world is lies."

SACRED PAWS – *Six Songs* 12" (Rock Action)
It's obvious why you might call this a post-punk record—you could file it alongside the RAINCOATS or the SLITS, songs also replete with poly-rhythms and the same resistance to the power chord (or seemingly any chords at all). Post-punk has always been an essentially meaningless term, though; sonically, chronologically, aesthetically. I'm drawn to the bands under that wide umbrella who embrace the possibility of wildness. Whether it is 1979 or 2015, ripping it up and starting again is harder than it seems, though. Most people try and fail. This record feels both purposeful and effortless. Rachel Aggs is a distinctive and iconic guitar player. It is hard to imagine anyone else writing this music, which is both evocative of our foremothers and completely contained in its own world. These songs were my constant companion in 2015, a reminder of the possibilities inherent in six strings.

PIÑÉN – *Emancipación* **EP (self-released)**
The vast majority of punk music is not political in its lyrical content. Much of that which is gives the rest a bad name—Colin Jerwood style yapping does not inspire insurrection here. PIÑÉN *is* a political band, but they are everything to me, a sonic force that rejuvenated my interest in bashing drums. This is hardcore anárquico y radikal, politics from the heart that hit you in the gut. This is a perfect record, the kind of punk band that inspires anyone else with something to say to start one of their own. We must constantly pry power from the hands of those holding it and then remember not to cling too tightly to it once it is released. PIÑÉN is explosive possibility, raw meaning and reality in a world of cold, calculated facsimile.

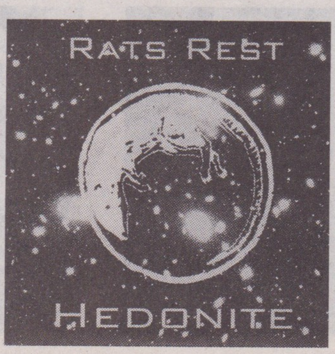
SHITFUCKS – *Det Är Ditt Fel* **EP (Rör Du Så Dör Du Skivproduktion)**
Assigning day at *MRR* is a trial. Once a print cycle, we listen to all of the records we received in the mail that month and decide which of our reviewers will tackle them in print. It can verge on torture; punk's certainly not dead, but sometimes after an afternoon of listening to a minute each of forty Euro-crust records, I wish I was. This was the best discovery of the year, the bright spot in an hours-long slog through that month's haul. I sent off for ten copies and gave them to all my friends. There are excellent bands outside of the anointed fifty that we all seem to talk about, I promise. If a copy of the NIXE's EP has proved too elusive for you, write to bandet@shitfucks.se for a more affordable fix. Swedish shouts over idiosyncratic punky ineptitude, pure bliss.

PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise" 45 (Total Punk)
In the future hardcore belongs exclusively to cool girls and the boys who do their bidding. This 45 is the template we'll all follow. Candice is my favorite guitarist in the currently USHC soundscape (in her other project MYSTIC INANE) and here she ranks as one of my favorite vocalists as well. Enough with the one-man hardcore bands du jour (*enough,* I said!), I demand a tape of Candice's singular visions in the New Year.

HOME BLITZ – *Foremost + Fair* **LP (Richie)**
You have to know the rules to know how to break them. Picasso was an expert draughtsman; Daniel DiMaggio could crank out power pop hits if he wanted to. This record is certainly the one on my list most likely to mystify *Maximum* readers. I've been waiting for this LP for half a decade; it is a staggering effort that eludes any of my attempts to characterize it. Peerless and repeatedly rewarding, this is pure pop for now people, absolutely worth the wait.

JJ DOLL – Demo CS (self-released)
This tape crept in under the wire—I got my copy a few days ago and coordinator privilege means I've delayed writing this list long enough to sit with it. This is a band bursting out of the gate fully-formed. Sara shrieks; peals of laughter cascade over Shiva's chromatic riffs. I can't help but think of the song "She's Onto You" as a threat to punk boys everywhere. I don't have a lyric sheet or know these people, so what do I know? It feels like a threatening feminist insurrection to me, though. When will punk men learn that we all warn each other about them, that an attack on one of us is an attack on us all? IVY is dead, long live JJ DOLL.

Top Ten Songs: LIME CRUSH – "Graveyard" / AQUARIAN BLOOD – "Savage Mind" / VIOLENCE CREEPS – "I'm Broke" / VIAL – "You're Not Safe" / SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK" / TERRY – "Talk About Terry" / DREGS – "Parallel Justice" / MIDNITE SNAXXX – "Don't Wake Me Up" / CCTV – "Paranoia" / BIG BLEACH – "I'm A Punk"



GREG HARVESTER *reviews records for* MRR. *He plays in SILENT ERA and runs the blog* Remote Outposts.

I'm hesitant to speak of records in absolutes. These are ten records that helped me out. They made me feel good when things were bad or bad when things were too good. I'm not sure if they're the *top ten* records of the year because that kind of talk is purely conjecture.

VEXX – *Give and Take* **EP (Katorga Works)**
There are days when I cannot stop listening to this record. There are other days when I *absolutely crave* this record. I can't sit still upon hearing the first couple of chords of "Black / White." It's a fucking pogo machine. Sometimes, I simply *think* about the song "Walking in the Rain" and it'll be stuck in my head for three days! Don't get me started on actually walking in the rain and feeling weird about everything while listening to that song. Plus, I saw them play live four times in two weeks and I couldn't stop smiling. It's an excellent balance of exuberance and malaise.

SBSM – *Joy / Rage* **CS (Remote Outposts)**
Full disclosure: I released this on my label, but it's sold out so I'm not trying to sell you anything. SBSM is pure, cathartic, fucked up rage. The minute-long opener ("OK") still confounds me after listening to it well over two hundred times. I have no clue what these three women are doing, but that song sounds closer to a full-blown anxiety attack than any tepid, fake-ass, boy-hardcore shit that came out in the last calendar year. (I'm not calling SBSM "hardcore.") The other three songs on here shift gears but sound like an enveloping wave of anxiety, strength, and all kinds of other emotions that aren't mine to map out for you. I'm so glad that this band and these people exist.

CCTV – *Quiet* **EP (Lumpy)**
I don't know how to say anything about this band that hasn't already been said, but I will say that this record is so good. It sounds immediately familiar and classic without sounding the least bit stale. Like, how do you hear the first five seconds of a song and already know that it's going to be one of your favorite songs of the year? I put "Paranoia" on a mix tape before I even listened to the song all the way through the first time! Sometimes a band just nails it.

RATS REST – "Hedonite/Out of the Darkness, Into the Night" 45 (Starcleaner), *Permanent Catastrophe* **EP (Erste Theke Tonträger),** *4 Songs* **CS (Stay Punk)**
Everything I've written about RATS REST within these pages has been slobbering, disgusting, fawning praise. That's because RATS REST plays insanely solid and timeless melodic punk that I'll still put on the turntable in 20 years.

TRTRKMMR – *Avec La Souillure Nous Entrons Au Règne De La Terreur* **LP (Iron Lung)**
I'm not going to really try and describe this record, but there's not a lot of other stuff out there like this. Purely analog power electronics? This whole record is wall-to-wall fucked up...*in a good way.* It's the sound of everything falling apart, everywhere. Every insert is stamped with human blood.

CONEHEADS – *L.P.1 Aka 14 Year Old High School PC-Fascist Hype Lords Rip Off Devo For The Sake Of Extorting $$$ From Helpless Impressionable Midwestern Internet Peoplepunks* **LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / International Players Club)**
For just a minute, let's forget the hype, the stories of idiots buying home-dubbed tapes for $100, and all the bullshit. Let's focus on the fact that some guys from Indiana got in their basement and busted out manic and hyperactive punk on their four-track that sounds like some lost Gulcher Records shit from 1981, but better. The lyrics are sometimes smart and incisive and always angry as fuck. Something about this is 100% in line with the sound in my head during an out-of-control coffee freakout, and that is just fine.

PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise" 45 (Total Punk)
This one almost slipped by me, but then the A-side gripped its claws into my brain and would not let go. I only listened to the goddamn song once and it stayed in my head for nearly a week! The guitar is the perfect amount of fucked and the vocals carry everything into the stratosphere. You know what is also great? The B-side.

NATURE BOYS – "Pissy Wind/Coast to Coast" 45 (Replay)
I'm not gonna waste space fawning all over this record like I did in these pages when it first came out because you fuckers don't pay attention to me anyway, but this record is fucking flawless. 100% P-O-S-E-R free punk that is desperate and dirty.

G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)
Once again, let's step outside of hype, the internet drama, and the bullshit. Put yourself in a shitty van brimming with tough punk women blasting this while flying down a highway, screaming along to "Outcast Stomp." This demo, now on vinyl, contains some of the sickest hardcore riffs produced this year. If you don't feel something while watching your queer friends scream "Straight America, you won't ruin me!" then you're already fucking dead.

CONSTANT INSULT – 12" (Let's Pretend)
CONSTANT INSULT has produced what are easily some of the catchiest vocal melodies I've heard all year. The music has the instant hooks of the best (read: "all") FROZEN TEENS songs, probably since one of their main songwriters is playing guitar here. Their not-so-secret weapon here is the other guitarist/singer, Katie, who has an incredible knack for digging her voice into your brain. Plus, their drummer is a beast. They have a bass player too. It's all great.

Also taking up so much space in my brain and on my stereo: PIG HEART TRANSPLANT – *For Mass Consumption* LP / UROCHROMES – CS / VIOLENCE CREEPS – flexi / MULLTUTE – LP / LIQUIDS – CS

IMOGEN BINNIE *is a columnist for* MRR.

AYE NAKO – *The Blackest Eye* 12" (Don Giovanni)
I guess it was cool to see, like, the *New York Times* and *Pitchfork* and stuff all writing about this band, but it was also strange because they're just some weirdos playing, like, noisy alternative rock. I mean, with feelings about serious stuff and lyrics that will fucking destroy you in the heart, but kinda like how DOWNTOWN BOYS were a reminder this year that punk rock doesn't always suck, I feel like this album was a reminder that sometimes alt rock rules too. Kind of like the PIXIES with bigger distortion pedals, less nonsense, and less yelping.

DOWNTOWN BOYS – *Full Communism* LP (Don Giovanni)
DOWNTOWN BOYS posted on their Twitter account that they were looking for a bass player, so at Girls Rock Camp this year I taught my bass class how to play "Monstro," took a video of them playing along to it on my phone, and tweeted it back at the band, who were like, "They're all hired!" So I got to tell a bunch of fourteen-year old girls that they were the new bass players in DOWNTOWN BOYS. I didn't really follow up so I don't know if their parents let 'em go on tour, but what I can tell you is that this record was an important reminder that punk stuff doesn't have to be the fucking worst. This was the album of the summer. And they're so sick live!

CLOUD RAT – Qliphoth LP (Halo of Flies / IFB / Moment of Collapse)
I know enough about the occult to know that CLOUD RAT is pretty deep into Kabbalah but I don't know enough about it to really know what they're doing with it. What I do know is that a lot of the time grindcore feels like prog rock to me because I feel like I have to do math to follow the changes, but listening to this record doesn't feel like doing math, it feels like punching a cop in the face and then feeling bad about the fact that cops exist. Fuckin' killer. Plus I think the singer did a TED talk or something? Like about female-fronted hardcore...? Did I make that up?

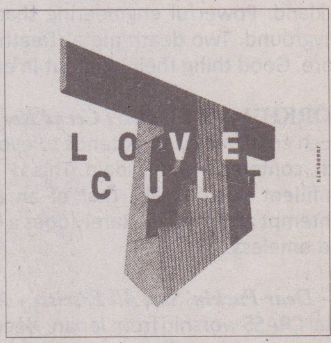
JUNGBLUTH – *Lovecult* LP (self-released)
These humorless Germans hate everything, including meat, sexism, fascism, and especially love. Honestly I had kinda hoped that this one would be even more brutal than their first album, but instead I feel like they pulled back some? It still destroys though; the drums sound like the fucking apocalypse even if the guitars sound a little less like lacerations. It's like crusties who fell in a puddle instead of crusties who took showers: still great but easier to spend time with.

RAGANA – *Wash Away* LP (An Out)
God, how even to talk about this album. RAGANA has been one of my favorite bands since their first tape in 2012 and it was so rad to get to see them put out vinyl. And it's their best stuff so far, long loud and quiet songs that go slow and fast and are vulnerable and powerful, doomy and sludgy with black metal stuff made entirely out of witchcraft?? I might not even have words for why I love this band so much but this shit is important. I hope that every band in 2016 does everything they can to rip them off.

BIRDS IN ROW – *Personal War* 12" EP (Deathwish Inc.)
Sometimes I just want to listen to some French dudes play screamo-y melodic hardcore that mostly pummels but also meanders sometimes. Leave me alone.

DIE! DIE! DIE! – *What Did You Expect* CD (self-released)
DIE! DIE! DIE! keeps getting weirder, and usually when we say "weirder" we mean "more annoying," but I think they're going in the opposite direction? Like they started out as this scraping and screeching brittle postpunk onslaught but the first song on their latest EP is loud punk stuff and then the next one is faster and super catchy and like a minute long, but then the last three just get slower and more melancholy. And also queasy and probably jangly, too. If I knew anything about New Zealand punk stuff I'd contextualize them for you but I've only listened to THE CLEAN like three times.

DAKHMA – *Raze* CS (self-released)
All I really did in March this year was watch Steven Universe cartoons and listen to this album. At first you're kind of like "that guitar sounds like it's being played through a cardboard box" but then for the rest of the record they fucking burn down and blast through everything except when they're taking a second to be quiet so that they can remind you just how fucking loud the loud parts are. Raze indeed. Totally killer blackened crust or whatever.



SVALBARD – *One Day All This Will End* **LP (Holy Roar)**
Speaking of blackened crust or whatever, I fucking live for this shit. This record destroyed me; it came out in November or something and I've pretty much just listened to it over and over since then. Hella blasts and D-beats and production clean enough that it almost veers into cheesy metal territory sometimes but fuck you, man, something doesn't have to sound like shit to rule. I don't think? Anyway I usually turn this kind of thing off as soon as the terrible vocalist starts performing obnoxious masculinity but that doesn't happen here; the main singer and the other singer are awesome. Woulda been album of the year if G.L.O.S.S. hadn't ruined it for everyone.

G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* **EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)**
I know everybody freaked out about this tape / record this year but listen, everybody was right to. Holy shit. The most perfect eight minutes of music ever recorded. Like, I guess I had sort of understood non-subgenre hardcore before this—we used to play GORILLA BISCUITS on shitty guitars and falling apart drum sets in Jen Schwartz's basement when I was in high school - but I had that thing with this record like "nothing has ever actually been FOR me, as a trans girl, and now that this thing is, I can see why nothing else has ever resonated like this before." I think I wrote a column about this but I was like, "Is this what cis people feel like all the time? That must be SICK AS HELL." Plus you can listen to it like a dozen times before work in the morning.

JASON RYAN *is a reviewer at* MRR.

SYMPTOM – *Demo + EP* **CS (self-released)**
From Boston, this is the best D-beat cassette of the year, channeling GLOOM, D-CLONE, FRAMTID, and '90s crustcore. Best D-beat live performance of the year (All Punks Go For It! in Fresno, CA). Drummer of the year.

SYNDICATE – Demo CS (self-released)
Haunting, moody chainsaws mixed with pop jams all perfectly echoed through a soup can phone. This tape is the best. I said in the first issue of the year that this was bent for the Top Tens, and I've thought so ever since.

DESPAIR – Demo CS (self-released)
Loose, corroded and nasty D-beat hardcore from Vancouver. Heavy and addictive like the old favorites of yesteryears. It doesn't try very hard, and succeeds—so why do you try so hard and fail?

LONG GONE – *Demo MMXIV* **CS (Bezerker)**
Crackling Scandinavian crust from Finland uprooting sold dark NYHC from the '90s, and I mean that with awesome respect. Such an interesting combination of distant influences; this tape really got my attention for both reasons. Confound it all, I love it.

ATRAMENT – *Demo MMXV* **CS (Sentient Ruin Laboratories)**
Fluid destruction and sophistication from beyond the grave. Errrr, I mean Oakland. Powerful engineering that pushes most demos back to the playground. Two death metal/Death-beat crushers that make me want more. Good thing their LP is out in early 2016.

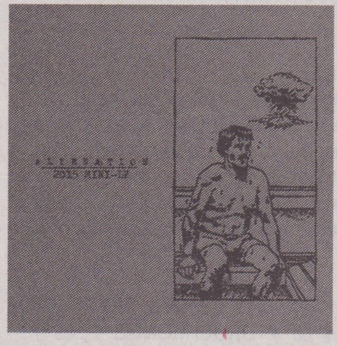
MÖRKHIMMEL – *Ostří Černé Kosy Zní* **LP (Insane Society)**
Czech crust/metal punk tends to evoke a messy image of hunched-over filth, contempt, and disdain. This LP stands tall with a long shadow and confident posture, like that of an archaic statue, yet also filled with contempt and disdain. Rarely does a band sound so intimidating, poised, and timeless.

C – *Dear Fuckin' Shit All Fascists + 2* **LP (Hardcore Survives)**
Total CRASS worship from Japan. Need I say more? Members of CONFUSE and each side plays on a different speed. ¯_(ツ)_/¯

PUTREFACTION – *Scavenger* **EP (Distro-y)**
A classic crustcore EP right out of the gate, war-crushing doom crust with skull rattling energy and an epic genuine nature. This walks a fine line between crust metal and hardcore punk. You're rolling your eyes at my hyperbole...Sounds disgusting? Is disgusting.

BUTCHER – *Holding Back the Night* **LP (Butcher)**
A jackhammering new LP that will break your neck with spastic raw fury that never lets up. Nuanced pig-gutting speed with wild boar blasts that leaves your head smoking and spinning on the end of a pike. One of those "WTF I can hardly keep up" punk LPs. The-mad-are-sane existential lyrics are wrapped and tagged in thematic effects. Amazing cover art collage by Tomohiro Matsuda.

FERALS – Demo CS (self-released)
This five-song demo was released on December 2nd, Straight Outta Disconsin, just three days before this list was due. Channeling WBTD, ANTISCHISM with some...EMPEROR guitar? That's a stretch, but it's in there. Yeah that is how hip and "on it" I am. The wonderful wasteland of Punk: to be continued...



JUSTIN BRIGGS *is a former coordinator of* MRR.

He currently reviews records for the magazine and runs Warthog Speak.

Here's what tickled muh' fancy, in alphabetical order...

AJAX – *Priced* **EP (Beach Impediment / Static Shock)**
A near-flawless sonic attack from a band that I assumed could never top their demo. They've now proven me wrong not once, but *twice*.

ALIENATION – *2015 Mini-LP* **12" (Warthog Speak)**
I have listened to this recording *at least* once a day since June or July and it is *hands down* my actual "favorite record of 2015." The fact that I got to release it is an added bonus, and is as insignificant as it is a supreme nod. I will never be able to accurately describe the thrill I got when I first hit the "play" button on what was, until that moment, just one of seemingly 1,000 recording projects that Cody was involved in this year. This 12" is exactly the sound I have been searching for my whole life and managed to absolutely nail the what I was trying for with my own most recent ill-fated band — the riffs and tone of *Pick Your King*, the all-go intensity of something like... I dunno, NEGATIVE FX, and a nod to the TOTALITÄR / HUVUDTVÄTT pathos without sounding at all predictable, obvious, or referential. And all that from a band from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

B SQUADRON – *Saturday's Soldiers* **EP (Rebellion)**
UK Oi! the way it should be—no attempt at stylized bullshit, no rock'n'roll or RAC nods, no safe hooks or pleasantries whatsoever. Just out-of-vogue, caveman style Oi! Oi! music. No more, no less. Like a perfect mix of LAST RESORT, the burlier 4-SKINS tracks ("Chaos," etc.), and THE OPPRESSED. No one does this style anymore, but if they did, they wouldn't do it as well as B SQUADRON anyway. This is a *great* record. Apparently they've broken up already, but happily there is at least one more single in the works.

CHAIN RANK – *Up Against the Wall* **LP (self-released)**
Perfect USA Hardcore of the Boston persuasion.

DEAD HERO / SECTA – split LP (Discos MMM / Discos Rat Trap)
I'm a sucker for the SECTA side of this record. Their super-hooky, melodic, Spanish-style punk rock with just the right amount of flanged goth edge make for excellent brawny, anthemic terrace chants. It's like

a classy mix of, say, TNT (the Spanish one), THE WIPERS, GENERACION SUICIDA, and '80s French Oi!. The DEAD HERO side is no slouch either, with its wonderfully catchy, female-fronted Oi! chants. This is a killer split from these two Colombian bands, and has spent much of the last month and a half on my turntable.

FIT FOR ABUSE – *Mindless Violence* **12" (Armageddon)**
I don't put reissues on year-end top tens, but this record — the original 7" version, at least — is the most important record of my entire life. It's kinda numbing to think that it came out eighteen years ago. This record and the influences behind it rearranged my teenage mind and basically set the path to music obsession that I still follow and the career I have chosen. FIT FOR ABUSE played Touch and Go, *Flex Your Head*, and X-Claim!-influenced hardcore punk from when no one was doing this style and no one cared. Hardcores weren't punks, and punks weren't hardcores. We were the dirty bad kids that the Nautica-clad sXe bros 20 minutes down I-190 couldn't wrap their heads around. (Even though most of our crew was sXe as well.) Anyway, in 1996 my high school friends made a perfect, no-bullshit hardcore record, and if you haven't heard it, you should change that because it was just reissued this year by Armageddon.

LAST CRUSADE – LP (Longshot / Rebellion)
This LP features melodic and catchy Oi! tunes penned by Canadian and British men living in the UK. Nothing reinvented, it's just great Oi! music in the vein of SUBWAY THUGS, TEMPLARS, and other '90s stuff of that ilk. The band is already done due to an expired visa, but the follow up act is picking up exactly where LAST CRUSADE left off.

RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* **EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)**
As silly as it is to still think in such an archaic way, I must admit that the general acceptance of Oi! music as a non-threatening punk trend for people with zero interest in actual skinhead culture or Oi!'s context or history is a massive turnoff to me. To be honest, the same can be said of most things to do with punk these days—have you looked at a lyric sheet this year? Yikes! Embarrassing at best. It's most often the bumps and bruises, and warts and scabs that make something special, but with so much of today's world that has all been revoked. Unfortunately, RIXE is the number one target of this sort of trendy nonsense this year, but I can't say the interest is unwarranted. This EP is a flawless set of tracks wrapped in great packaging on a fantastic record label, played by three dudes that fully grasp the context and idea of what a skinhead is and what it really stands for; none of the windfall has anything to do with them. I can't wait to hear more.

STRESS SS – *Fest* **EP (Adult Crash)**
To call STRESS SS "TOTALITÄR Junior" is both a necessity and a disservice. This EP can stand on its own next to TOTALITÄR's hottest releases, and that is the highest of recommendations.

V/A – *La Force dans la Oi! Vol. 2* **EP (Une Vie Pour Rien Vinyles)**
The 7" compilation is a format usually reserved for throwaway tracks and leftovers, and more often than not, is not worth exploring. This EP is a great exception. I proclaim that "Contre Vents et Marees," the SYNDROME 81 track on this compilation, is hands down the single best song of 2015—a chilling tune. This EP is the second volume of U.V.P.R.'s collections of new French Oi! bands, and while the RIXE, OUTREAU, and TRAITRE can stand on their own as high-quality offerings —again, a comp rarity in its own right—the S81 tune is untouchable.

LAYLA GIBBON *is a reviewer and a former content coordinator of* MRR.

The Powers That Be have changed the rules so we aren't allowed to expound on the records we consumed and were consumed by in the traditional longwinded *MRR* manner, so if you want to read my full 2015 musical rollercoaster ride (Ten LPs! Ten 45s! More than ten cassettes! Ten reissues! Records that are not punk!), you can check out my rarely updated blog where I will post the complete report sometime in January 2016 along with other reports from likeminded compatriots! See whatwewantisfree.blogspot.com. I also present to you the "Records that were released in the weird purgatory that is the End of the Year and so missed full consideration for last year's list *and* this year's list" zone right here in this intro…2014's slipped thru the cracks: THE INTENDED – "Huguenot/The Alchemist" 45 and WITCHING WAVES – *Fear of Falling Down* LP, both of which were amongst my most listened-to discs of 2015. Anyway here is a tiny slice of the records I was couldn't stop flippin' out to in 2015, perhaps one of the worst years in human memory?!

CCTV – *Quiet* **EP (Lumpy)**
Favorite disc of 2015! Nervous furtive fraught invocations of the indignities of modern life, anxiety and paranoia, everything sounds like it was recorded on a boombox at the wrong speed adding to the strange feeling of otherworldliness, like walking through a dead mall full of fake plants and broken ideas. It's perfectly retro—it sounds like a recently excavated secret basement from the 1979 New Wave/punk collision—but it's from now and is fresh yet eternal. SU TISSUE dreamscape.

SACRED PAWS – *Six Songs* **12" (Rock Action)**
Perfect record! It's so energizing and uplifting, total power with an untouchable dreamy/introspective feeling that leaves me reeling. This is post-punk insurrection, like what I imagined SLITS sounded like when I found out that NENEH CHERRY was in a later incarnation of the group…Freedom! Everything Rachel Aggs does is 100% and this is no exception. Her guitar style borrows from the coolest early '80s London post-punk adventure girls and the most transcendent African Highlife and with the addition of her former GOLDEN GRRLS bandmate Eilidh there's an added extra layer of melancholic beauty to these uplifting numbers. Listened to this an insane amount of times, truly a great LP.

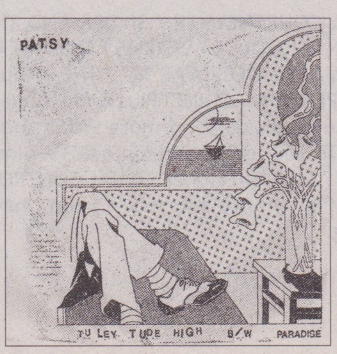
PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise" 45 (Total Punk)
I think PATSY features Nathan and Candice from MYSTIC INANE (who put out two of the best 45s this year!) and this demonstrates that you should just buy everything they do. Killer killer killer! If Dez Cadena was a girl and new dimensions in modern rehashes of previous ideas of punk were a possibility.

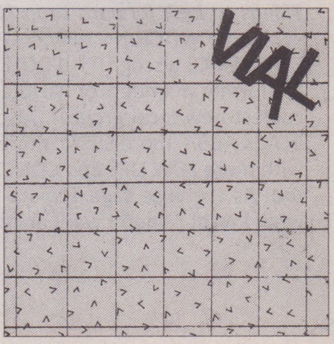
AQUARIAN BLOOD – *Savage Mind* **EP (Goner)**
Total destruction! Like ANGRY ANGLES discovered FATHER YOD and PCP and combined all these things into an insane wall of destruction and woe! I think this band is expansive and features many participants but the driving force being former members of NOTS and a current member of EX-CULT should make your blood pressure rise suitably if you have any sense.

LIME CRUSH – *Graveyard* **EP (Fettkakao)**
Singer sounds like she should be in KLEENEX, music is somewhere between the more garage-y HUGGY BEAR stuff and the PHANTOM PREGNANCIES and this 7" is a non-stop killer lurching punk attack!

SNEAKS – *Gymnastics* **12" (Danger)**
Further evidence the DC scene has experienced major / incendiary rejuvenation in the past couple years…Incredible CHANDRA / 99 Records configuration that I just can't stop listening to.

VIAL – *You're Not Safe* **EP (Cut-Rate)**
Krista is an incredible and iconic front person, with a remarkable voice, like if DINAH CANCER was a tough HC girl?! I've seen 'em cover LAST RITES' "Chunks" but they also get compared to FLIPPER and the BAGS! I think of them as a hardcore band but have gotten in arguments with





people about it, perhaps because women are never truly "hardcore" according to the general punk populace?! I have no idea how anyone could listen to this and not think that it's a hardcore record though. The guitar is burly in a classic Touch and Go manner and the lyrics are smart and to the point, interrogating gentrification and gender constructs as well as total alienation/anxiety. I love this band, and this 45 is killer.

BLACK TIME – ***Aerial Gobs Of Death*** **LP (Förbjudna Ljud)**
All hail BLACK TIME, architects of the brutal and arcane...Transporting the listener to the collapsing concrete shopping centers of London, in which girls and boys informed as much by the Medway Sound as the Situationist ideal hack out a new / old existence in the ashes of commerce. What other group could summon thoughts of HUGGY BEAR, SWELL MAPS, early Michigan garage sounds, Musique Concrète, and girls in bootleg Mary Quant / Bridget Riley get ups reading Sheila Delaney's teenage works...BLACK TIME is the way and the truth. The sound of irate bedroom masterworks—when Lemmy Caution shouts he's got no expectations you can feel that tool Jagger's smug sprawl of expectations slowly eating away at the earth... Janey Too-bad's voice on the title track makes me wanna grab a Silvertone and join the WHAT FOUR (or the MOD 4). This is a piercing, shambling, devastating view into two years of bedroom recordings by London's only garage band.

MIDNITE SNAXXX – "Don't Wake Me Up/Pull Down the Shades" 45 (Total Punk)
Never really paid attention to these punkers—I remember their earlier records being sort of more power pop/Bomp! girlsound, which is cool, but not always what I want. Then this sick 45 appeared and I realized I needed to shape the fuck up. Insane KBD/*Girls in the Garage* hybrid sounds for furious modernists! Kill or be killed.

SHITFUCKS – ***Det Är Ditt Fel*** **EP (Rör Du Så Dör Du Skivproduktion)**
I described this to a friend as "The Swedish ABORTED with an insane possessed lady who could be in KLEENEX or RUTTO singing," and if that isn't want you want out of life then I can't help you.

Runners up: MYSTIC INANE – *Eggs Onna Plate* and *Ode to Joy* EPs / DRINKS – *Hermits on Holiday* LP / PIERRE & BASTIEN – *Que du Bonheur* LP / NOTS – "Virgin Mary/Shelf Life" 45 / TERRY – *Talk About Terry* EP / ANGIE – *Free Agent* LP / LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* LP / VEXX – *Give and Take* EP / CONEHEADS – *LP.1* / VIOLENCE CREEPS – *On My Turf* EP and "I'm Broke/Gridlock" flexi 7" / BLACK ABBA – "Betting On Death/Civilized" 45 / SHOPPING – *Why Choose* LP

Cassettes/Demos: BLACK ABBA / G.L.O.S.S. / MOZART / the WORLD / AQUARIAN BLOOD / SUSAN / UROCHROMES / FREAK / VERTIGO / JJ DOLL / BIG BLEACH / PENNYCRESS / GENDERDOG / NAIL CLUB / 100% / RAYS / SBSM / GAUCHE

Reissues: INDEX – *Demo* EP / BIKINI KILL – *Revolution Girl Style Now* LP / PINK SECTION – LP / INFLATABLE BOY CLAMS – 2xEP / STICK MEN WITH RAY GUNS – *Grave City* LP / PLASTIX – *Ich Bin Modern* LP / TOŽIBABE – *Dežuje* EP / SCHUND – EP / SOBERANÍA PERSONAL – *Benditos Sean Muñecos Que Pegan* LP / BROKEN TALENT – *Rules No One* LP / BILLY SYNTH – LPs / DEPARTMENTSTORE SANTAS – *At The Medieval Castle Nineteen 100-Year Lifetimes Since* LP / MERCENÁRIAS – *Demo 1983* EP / THE ELECTRONIC HOLE – LP / COUNTRY TEASERS – *Empire Strikes Back* LP

Things to look forward to in 2016: COURTNEYS LP / SPIDER AND THE WEBS LP / WITCHING WAVES LP / IN SCHOOL EP / VEXX 45 / MOZART 45 / HYSTERICS discog LP / JJ DOLL triple LP / PIECE WAR 12" / THE WORLD EP (former members of PANG and PENNY MACHINE! Plus Andy Human, coolest new local group!). Also the punks demand more PATSY, more BLACK ABBA, more SBSM, more NOTS, more ONJ and more CCTV. Along with more LOW LIFE and CONSTANT MONGREL, more TOTAL CONTROL, too. As the wise sage Tomata Du Plenty once inferred: if I can't have what I want / I don't want anything.

LYDIA ATHANASOPOLOU *is a former content coordinator of* MRR.

I'm on a plane right now, flying across the country, then across the Atlantic. I'm contemplating the last year and along with it the bands and records that left a mark on me. Do we choose music to match our mood, or do we listen to music to counteract it? I would say both, though mostly I listen to music because I would go insane without it. As with every year-end top ten list I've done so far, for better or worse, I write about the records that I actually listened to constantly, and not the ones I think should be on this list. Hopefully you will appreciate the honesty. Punk is love, my undying love.

AUSENCIA – ***Sombra de Exilio*** **EP (Discos MMM / Verdugo)**
This EP has been on such heavy rotation I am surprised it still plays. Something about AUSENCIA checks every box for me. The melancholy driving the whole sound is what gets me the most, whether that is found in the riffs, the vocals, or the Spanish-language lyrics, which, especially on the self-titled track, literally make me well up with emotion. This is coming straight from the depths of existence—simply poignant.

BARCELONA – ***Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona*** **12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)**
With some of the most gruesome vocals in hardcore right now, this gives all the tough boy acts out there a run for their money. Unrestrained raw hardcore energy that is heavy and pounding. Some tracks on here have a certain transcendent effect on me, transforming the listen into something deeper; it's almost like experiencing a primitive ritual. Engrossing and hostile, *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* sounds like a testament to the chaos that envelops us a little more each day. Pouring that aggravation into their instruments, BARCELONA channel something pure and expel something frightening and filthy—and the record cover also manifests that perfectly. Supreme!

CIUDAD LINEAL – ***El Nuevo Hombre*** **LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)**
This is probably the record I listened to the most this year—at home, at work, on my bike, when I needed something to match my mood and also when I needed something to counteract it: a rare trait in a record you must admit. From beginning to end, every track is a well-crafted and highly contagious minimal wave masterpiece. It sounds simple at first but, with every listen, I discover more ways in which they've given this thought and attention, making it a highly addictive, multi-layered record. The structural development of the songs and the beat repetitions make it comforting, the lyrics and artwork support the conceptualization driving the sound, while the synth melodies and nuanced electronic details just enchant me. Tracks like "Horizonte," "Máquinas," "Industria," "Los

Olvidados" and "Impulso" (my most played track of the year, for sure) have woven their way into my heart, transforming *Nuevo Hombre* into a haven to go back to. Count me in as an über-fan.

DIÄT – *Positive Energy* LP (Adagio830 / Iron Lung)
Sometimes you hear a song and you know it's going to play in your brain from now until the end of time. DIÄT's first full-length was well worth the wait, as they deliver a fine-tuned platter that encapsulates the band's spirit like few other releases this year. The attention paid to detail, the cohesion to the aesthetic, lyrics, and production, the originality to the songwriting and execution, all point to DIÄT becoming a true post-punk force to be reckoned with. Not many bands manage to channel the bleak existential realities of modern life into something as captivating as *Positive Energy* (even the name is brilliantly conceived) but DIÄT manages it without even breaking a sweat.

LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
An absolute banger from start to finish! Packed with riffs, hooks and some of the most passionate vocals in punk right now, LA MISMA have unleashed a record that is as shambolic as it is forceful. Brimming with enough energy to melt your speakers, this record hits hard without losing any of its ability to stick in your head like a splinter. Best riff of the year goes to the *Kanizadi* opener, a perfect homage to CRISIS for which I am most grateful. A tour de force that puts LA MISMA at the forefront of the exciting NYC scene right now.

MUERTE – LP (Cabeza de Vaca / Cintas Pepe / SPHC)
Arriving just in time to get on to this list, this follow up LP to MUERTE's demo (which I adored) is certainly a magnificent next step for my favourite current band from Mexico. MUERTE abides by no rules and, much like their tape, they fantastically blend a mix of dark punk melodies, hardcore D-beats, and black metal atmosphere without getting too heavy on any one of those elements, but instead forging a new sound that is unique and fresh. I believe it was Robert Collins who described it as "death punk," and that's a definition I endorse. Adding a couple more mid-tempo tracks to the action, they balance them out with darker, faster songs that remind me of why I fell for this band to begin with. Melodic and despairing with exceptional vocals, guitar hooks and riffs that are as spine-chilling as they are catchy and enraged, drumming that highlights and propels the sub-styles in a most appropriate manner, and a final production that may not be as noisy as their demo, but is certainly as loud and chaos-inducing. MUERTE does what they do unapologetically and I could not be happier!

ORDEN MUNDIAL – *El Nuevo Sonido Balear* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Are three songs enough to make you spin a record over and over? Of course they are! This tour EP is so fierce I fear a nosebleed every time I jam it at top volume. ORDEN MUNDIAL has proven why they should be considered one of the best hardcore bands on the planet right now, and this EP only furthers that theory for me. Sharp, aggressive, and furiously fast, *El Nuevo Sonido Balear* feels like an alignment of forces so powerful they're almost jumping out of the speakers. A fierce beast, truly incomparable, in terms of both sound and realization. A mindblowing band.

RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
RIXE is the best surprise to come out of France this year! Four pogo-perfect Oi! tracks that draw from the best of classic canons, a mix of raw Oi!, burly hardcore, and dirty punk. With tracks that are as empowering and fun as they are stomping and rowdy, this EP is so damn catchy it's ridiculous. RIXE keeps the tone upbeat, with the vibrant bass and agitated drums making this positively bounce with oomph. You don't necessarily have to reinvent the wheel to make a timeless punk record and this is exactly that. Killer!

SANG – *Món Oblidat* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Can I just get SANG to play from the imaginary speakers in the sky every morning when I leave my house? Italy has never had a shortage of raging, vicious hardcore and punk bands and SANG keeps that point proven with one hell of an EP. With massive riffs, pummeling drums and gnarly female vocals—I'm addicted to the opening vocals and drums to "Peus de Fang"—this earns my deepest esteem for its teeth-baring ferocity and serrated edge sound. Sung in Catalan, the lyrical aspect intrigues and mystifies me and I find it complements the straightforward aggression of the music, giving this an additional dimension often missing from hardcore records. "Hemp Pertut la Vida" is one of my favourite songs of the year. Get it or get out.

STRASBOURG – *Fruit de la Passion* LP (Le Turc Mecanique)
What a band, what a record! After last year's superb *Sex et Violence* 12", comes another great record from Bordeaux's STRASBOURG. Fusing minimal coldwave beats with hypnotic synths, the resulting sounds are pure poetry to my ears. Sung in French, the vocals drip with venomous seduction as the songs meander through the darker corners of human desire—for me, this is the perfect soundtrack to self-destructive hedonism. The whole record is soaked in an eerie and decadent ambience, accentuated perfectly by the violin, which comes to the forefront in the most infectious of ways. It lingers in my mind like the best of memories. Just stunning. #totalbandcrush

MATT BADENHOP *reviews records for* MRR. *He plays in the band SILENT ERA.*

DIÄT – *Positive Energy* LP (Adagio830 / Iron Lung)
The opening track on here is such "single material" that I was afraid the rest wouldn't stand up to it. While that song, "Young and Successful," is the standout track, the whole album features a steady stream of dissonant but danceable punk, complete with standout production and all the right sounds pulled out of the instruments.

G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)
2015: The Year of the G.L.O.S.S. I imagine most people will pick this one. Throughout the year I kept thinking, "Is the hype brainwashing me?" I throw it on to check myself and I am floored every time.

MERCENÁRIAS – *Demo 1983* EP (Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada)
I didn't want to put reissues on my list, but I had to make an exception for this because I was so blindsided by MERCENÁRIAS' ferocity and innovation. I've been consistently enjoying the compilation of this band's material that Soul Jazz Records released back in 2005 ever since my friend and I special ordered it at our local record shop. It's one of those records I pull out while drunkenly punishing a guest like, "have you heard *this?*" So I knew I'd probably like this demo. Still, this just completely exceeded my expectations. Those vocals! You like raw punk? No distortion pedals! This is *real* raw punk!

MUERTE – LP (Cabeza de Vaca / Cintas Pepe / SPHC)
This LP arrived just in time! I was initially reluctant to pick it since I obviously haven't played it as much as all the others, but I'm fairly certain it's gonna get many spins over the next few months. Seemingly unconcerned about pleasing any particular genera-fans, MUERTE washes over you with a reverb-drenched brutality that goes in whatever direction it feels like at any given time. They do this with some big guitar hooks and creative drumming that further distinguishes their sound from being simply defined as Mexican hardcore, post-punk, etc.

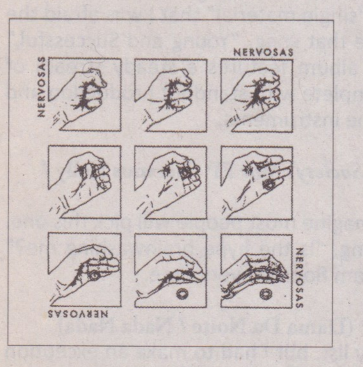
MÜLLTÜTE – 12" (self-released)
Germany's most consistently awesome recent hardcore band upgraded to a brilliant 45 rpm 12" this year. This is distinct hardcore with a lot of heart and soul, which is something I feel is lacking from many contemporary hardcore bands. It's easy for bands to get stuck in their formulas and put out the same record over and over, but this release sees MÜLLTÜTE evolve, adding more melody and cool collaborative additions from friends. Außergewöhnlich!

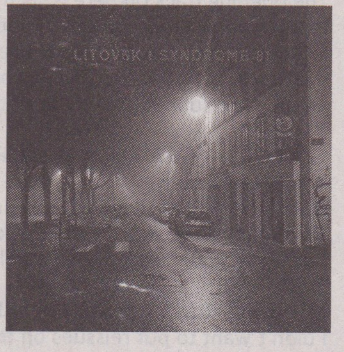
NERVOSAS – LP (Dirtnap)
There are so many great songs on this one LP! Endless doses of frantic rhythms and layered melodies topped with huge vocals. I love a raw and inept punk band, but I equally love great songwriting and precise delivery. NERVOSAS truly has a signature style and hatches so many little earworms throughout this record.

RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
The fact that this is an Oi! record is irrelevant to me. The fact that it's a perfect punk EP is all that matters. Power and hooks galore.

LITOVSK / SYNDROME 81 – split EP (Backwash/Destructure/ Emergence)
Once I discovered this record I played it non-stop for like, two days. I had to force myself to stop in order to prevent burnout. You get one original and one cover by each of these band two bands from the western tip of France, which made me feel apprehensive about choosing this at first. The 7" would be top ten material with just the two original songs, but the covers actually add more to this release than you'd expect. Both bands feature the best elements of dark punk and Oi!, and have had cool demos out for at least a year or so, so I see this release as a very exciting indication of what's to come.

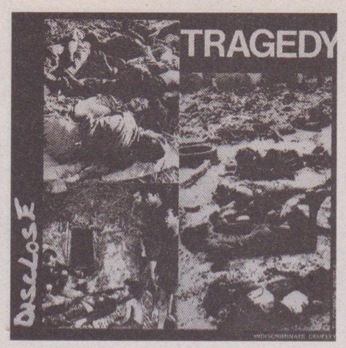
ZONE INFINIE – *Les Failles* LP (Maloka / Senseless Acts of Anger / Bisounours Prod)
Here's one that probably slipped past a lot of you this year. I think this album can easily appeal to folks into the new wave of Oi! stuff just as easily as the punks eating up all the UK82 informed bands. It's crazy to hear a band come out of nowhere—they have no demo or EP that I could find—with a repertoire of perfect punk songs. If you like getting guitar melodies stuck in your head and singing along to shit in French even if you don't know the language, you need this.

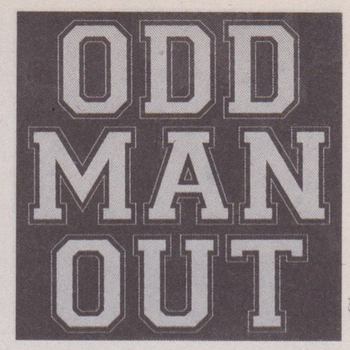




MAX WICKHAM *is a local nerd who has somehow convinced* MRR *it's a good idea for him to review for their magazine, as well as live at the compound (they'll get wise soon). His friends Grace and Eli, while sometimes amused by his antics, are very close to smothering him in his sleep. He plays in a few bands (including PROFILE, SCALPED, FATIGUE, and FACE THE RAIL), but mainly gets shit from three-year-olds all day.*

AJAX – *Priced* EP (Beach Impediment / Static Shock)
This 7" is the musical equivalent of a '60s B-movie about dirty teenage bikers driving their hogs across the country in search of the perfect party, the perfect girl, and the perfect score. "Appeal to Heaven" hits on the A-Side and I can almost feel the wind in my hair. Cue Henry Fonda wearing a BASTARD shirt and Russ Meyer directing in Docs and some leather gloves, and you've got a hit. This record is restless, gritty,





and driving. Maybe the main character of this movie learns a valuable lesson about the dangers of rugged Nietzschean individuality at the end. "Paper & Steel" is the sonic equivalent of this particular anti-hero's reformation and the fadeout is his untimely demise, obviously spurned by his devotion to living by his own rules. Who knows? This record rips. That's why it's on here. For Fans Of: bright, shiny chrome; slicked back, shoulder-length blond hair; methamphetamine.

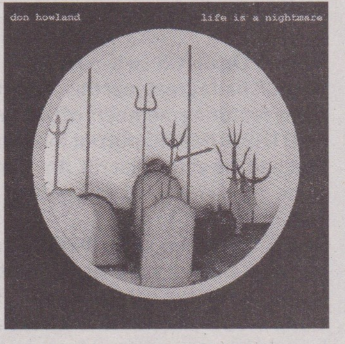
RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Who says Oi! needs to be over produced, polished, and filled with annoying hooky leads? Just throw a couple of "Ooohs" and "Ahhhhs" in over some tough vocals and you're 2015's punk darlings. (Honorable mention: CROWN COURT.) This record sounds like the guitar amp is made of bricks and the singer is ten feet tall. RIXE is absolutely no frills. I can't understand much of what he's saying, but in the title track he screams "Liberté" and it sounds like an accusation. There was a point in the early to mid '00s where every Oi! band had to sound like they were on Hellcat Records and even genre stalwarts like the TEMPLARS were convinced that they should record in a proper studio. What a mistake! (Thanks, Mark Noah.) Thankfully this record is devoid of any of that nonsense. It's truly a gem. Listen and worship. For Fans Of: Cutting your friend's hair; only playing down strokes; learning to be a butcher.

DISCLOSE – *Tragedy* LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Earlier today we were discussing whether there were five records that every *MRR* shitworker could agree on. I personally don't think so; once you get past BLACK FLAG and the RAMONES everything becomes a subjective nightmare. But I would hope that DISCLOSE's *Tragedy* LP would at least be on the list for most DIY punkers, seeing as how absolutely essential this record is to the broader raw punk and D-beat genres that sprang from it. I mean, at this point, some people talk about DISCLOSE like they talk about NIRVANA. What's especially radical is that La Vida En Mus utilized the original mixes (a version I had never heard because I'm a fucking plebe who has successfully conned my way into living at *MRR* under the guise of "knowing what I'm talking about") and I got to listen to this masterpiece with fresh ears. Most of you have heard this platter but I gotta say, upon re-listening, the drums sound like they were triggered with a sample of the gunshots that killed Kennedy and the guitars sound like the screams of the poor Texans who witnessed it. I mean, where was Kawakami when the president was shot? On the grassy knoll perhaps? (He wasn't born yet but I'd like to think maybe his parents decided to take a vacation stateside and were there.) Aesthetically this reissue is on point: heavy cardstock, tip-on cover, the same classic stark artwork, and a sizeable insert. I'm in hog heaven. For Fans Of: writing band names on your trapper keeper in eighth grade; daiya cheese; touring with NO FUCKER.

ODD MAN OUT – *Sold Out* EP (Warthog Speak)
Hardcore has always been around. It's like cockroaches. Or Keith Richards. It's always gonna be around. What makes this record a Top Ten of 2015 is that it's unrelenting. It not only appeals to a shared sense of purpose in hardcore (straightedge), but it also appeals to anger (revenge). I feel that sense of assuredness is lost in contemporary punk. It's so easy to write music that stands for nothing, that lives in a world of fashion, of appearance, and of nihilism. Standing for something—*anything*—sets you apart, makes you a cut above the rest. This record is self-assured. It is confident and it is powerful. It is so stripped down and heavy that ideologically there is no room for interpretation. This record simply is. For Fans Of: boots in summer; calling football soccer; being in 20 bands.

PROTESTER – ***No Identity*** **EP (Triple B)**
The DC scene is like the social equivalent of a volcano. Much like how the crust of the earth is constantly churning under itself, at times violently releasing waves of magma, which will slowly, over millions of years, be reabsorbed and rereleased, DC seems to have constant wave of people ebbing towards hardcore and creating amazing music, stoking the fires for younger generations. It's constant. It's relentless. And it's powerful. PROTESTER is one of those bands (really, one guy) that seems innately connected to the pulse of hardcore, creating music that is technical without sacrificing aggression or purpose. Much like every other scene in the USA, PROTESTER is part of a cabal of young punks who are in each other's bands and I feel this kind of relationship only serves to make every new record and project better. For Fans Of: touring six months out of the year; making the right decisions at the wrong time; breaking your toe at the gym.

PURE DISGUST – ***Chained*** **EP (Katorga Works / QCHQ)**
This record is *heavy*. It's mean. It's so fucking angry. The singer sounds like he's gargling gravel. Everything about this record elicits a very visceral response. It follows the foundation set by bands like IRON CROSS (and much more recently 86 MENTALITY) but instead of aping elements of those bands, PURE DISGUST builds on their framework. They excel because they move beyond their forebears. That, along with the very potent lyrical content, makes *Chained* one of the most involved listens of any record released this year. For Fans Of: taxation without representation; Del Taco; passing notes in class.



CØNDITIØN – ***Actual Hell*** **12" (Iron Lung)**
Not a lot of people know this but BASTARD recorded a record in between *Controlled in the Frame* and *Wind of Pain* in a warehouse made out of concrete in Los Angeles. The warehouse's only function was to mix more concrete to build additions to itself. The band spent thousands of dollars painstakingly making their instruments (that's drum shells, guitars, and bass, as well as strings and microphones) out of the concrete run-off from the giant mixing machines, which were steam punk-looking contraptions that could have been in *Metropolis*. Then they went to SeaWorld to record whale calls and through the magic of early '90s recording technology, wove them throughout the record, creating an atmospheric patchwork of guitar sounding effects. BASTARD was happy with the experiment but desired to leave the culprits of this musical masterpiece a mystery. The hardest part, then, was finding a suitable casting director to cast the "band." Luckily, a very talented young agent, just about to make her bones in the big city (she would later cast *Forrest Gump*) took on the job and got the break of her life when she found five young gentlemen (Sam, Ian, Irvin, Jeremy, Matt) down on their luck in Echo Park to play the band. It was renamed CØNDITIØN and slated for a '91 release. Unfortunately, the tapes were lost in transit until the archaeological team of Jon and Jensen (you might know them from their short lived *History* channel show *Digless//No Digging*) uncovered the tapes in a cavern created by the '94 earthquake in Northridge and subsequently released *Actual Hell* on their Iron Lung imprint. No one knows what happened to the five hapless gentlemen in the photo on the back of the record, but on the day of *Actual Hell*'s release, a mere month ago, there were riots at record stores across the country as consumers scratched and clawed to purchase this piece of musical history. (Three dead, fifteen wounded.) Easily top three records released this year (or the last five years).

ROYAL HEADACHE – ***High*** **LP (Distant & Vague / What's Your Rupture)**
I wouldn't be surprised if every mixtape made by every disaffected, artsy kid in the western hemisphere for his/her crush didn't at least have "High," "Little Star," or "Electric Shock" on it. Everything about this record is cathartic—the end of the song "High" where singer homie repeats *"come get me"*; the intro track where he's like "through perfect worlds I travelled far and wide... I thought I didn't need you anymore." That shit straight-up sounds like SIMON & GARFUNKEL on "Scarborough Fair"—"remember me to one who lives there / she once was a true love of mine"—except updated for power poppy/punk sensibilities. This record excels because it appeals to everyone's sense of romance, disappointment, and longing, packaged (for the most part) inside three minute long songs that are easy to digest. This record is pop perfection. This record is picnic on a sunny summer day perfection. For Fans Of: e.e. cummings; having a crush on your college lit professor; making a fool of yourself in front of close friends and everyone laughing about it afterwards.

NO TOLERANCE – ***You Walk Alone*** **LP (Painkiller / QCHQ)**
You can try to be like NO TOLERANCE—you can write the same riffs, you can have the same breakdowns, but you're never gonna be able to really pull it off. They are a cut above. The tracks are more earnest than what you can write. You believe what they're saying and you come away from the listening experience feeling like DFJ was just yelling at you for being a flunky for 20 minutes. "Watch You Break" has gotta be the sonic equivalent of going through boot camp. It's a punishingly hard riff. It makes you jealous that you didn't write it. This record is great. It excels because of its simplicity, in the way that only a *Hardcore* record can. You won't write anything like this. For Fans Of: noogies from your older brother, going to wrestling tournaments, long johns in winter.

FORCED ORDER – ***Vanished Crusade*** **LP (Revelation)**
Easily one of the most crushing records released this year, *Vanished Crusade* lives in the dark space between RINGWORM's *The Promise* and INTEGRITY's *Systems Overload*. It's dark, stifling, intense, hateful, and beautiful, in the way that a car fire or an explosion is beautiful. The record quickly transitions from fast paced bursts of aggression, to groovy breaks, to somber, melodic transitions. It's cathartic in the way that the best hardcore is. When the singer growls, "We exist to watch you die", you think of that person you can't stand and you think about revenge. This record is the musical equivalent of the flick *Falling Down*. The world is against you. You internalize your anger. You explode. And then you die while the closing track (a Melnick brothers influenced jammer) "Alanfa" quietly whisks you away from your miserable existence. This record is teeth gnashing gold all the way through. For Fans Of: Sunday crossword puzzles; leaked Quentin Tarantino scripts; *Paradise Lost*.

MITCH CARDWELL *is a reviewer for* MRR.

ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP (S-S)
Spilled lotsa ink on this already, but it's my favorite, most obsessed-over album of 2015. The band also dominates live, with newer material pointing toward continued excellence. Reptoid Rock!

BLACK ABBA – "Betting On Death/Civilized" 45 (Goner)
So negative. So satisfying.

CCTV – ***Quiet*** **EP (Lumpy)**
Crave-worthy on a near-Dangerhouse-ian level. Mine reads "Community College Teenage Valedictorian." The best 7" of the year, no contest.

DON HOWLAND – ***Life Is a Nightmare*** **LP (12XU)**
No dust on Mr. Howland, no ma'am. The gent has been pounding out gems forever and *Life Is A Nightmare* still manages to startle with its level of quality. Oooooooh boy, I can relate.

HOME BLITZ – ***Foremost + Fair*** **LP (Richie)**
My respect for this band is so goddamn severe that I'm intimidated by each new record they make. This one, like the others, conquered me immediately.

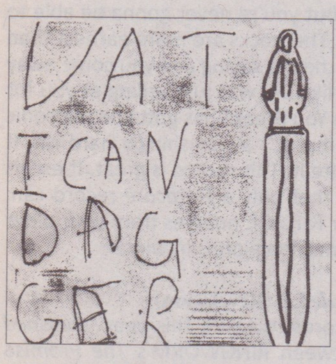
OBNOX – *Know America* **LP (Ever/Never)**
I've spun this endlessly, most often during the wee hours, when I was as fuzzy as the production heard here. The best songs, concept, and sound of any OBNOX release, which are legion.

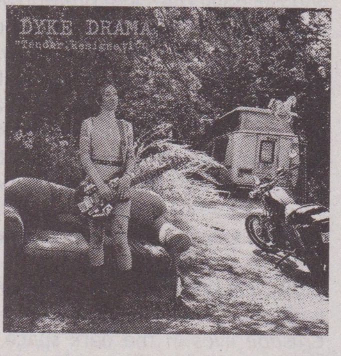
RICHARD PAPIERCUTS – *If* **LP (Ever/Never)**
If commands attention: high art, deviant sheen, bold post-punk with brains and aggression. It ain't for everyone, but if it's for you, you're pumped.

SWIFTUMZ – *Everybody Loves Chris* **LP (Melters)**
Chris makes it look easy. Maybe music is easy, I dunno. I'm not gonna try. I'll just keep listening to SWIFTUMZ albums.

V/A – *Scrap!* **CD (Mangrove)**
The 1990s had *Chloroform.* The 2000s had *Ad Vice.* Now the 2010s have *Scrap!*, Mangrove's third top-tier take on Japanese punk.

VATICAN DAGGER – "Not To Be/The Mess" 45 (Total Punk)
Total Punk had a fuckin' colossal year, but I'd single this 'un out as the chart-topper.





RAY MARTINEZ *is a columnist for MRR and the editor of* No Friends, *a new fanzine based out of Chicago.*

DYKE DRAMA – *Tender Resignation* **12" (Salinas)**
This is the best record of the year. Hands down. No questions. Ask me when I'm drunk; ask me when I'm sober. This is Sadie Switchblade's solo project. She plays every damn instrument on the record besides the organ. G.L.O.S.S. blows me away, but DYKE DRAMA draws me in. Its got Westerberg's swagger, BENT OUTTA SHAPE's shamble, and some of the best songwriting and lyrics I've heard in years. I hope to see DYKE DRAMA live in a basement in the Midwest, bottle in hand, cares at the door, and with an arm around a friend sometime next year. All your songs are now obsolete.

JAMIE AND THE DEBT – *No, Life Isn't* **CS (self-released)**
Jamie from MALLWALKERS does a solo recording with a drum machine and some of the most insanely blown out sounding guitars. Her voice is utterly captivating, and the hooks dig deep. Some tracks sound like they could be on a *Bullshit Detector* comp, others sound like a very, very personal bedroom project that maybe you shouldn't have listened to at all.

ROYAL HEADACHE – *High* **LP (Distant & Vague / What's Your Rupture)**
This is the best rock'n'roll record of the year. Not punk, not garage. *Rock'n'roll.* People these days are always forgetting about the "roll" part. Just rocking out is boring and for dads and untalented idiots (which I guess between the two categories includes most punks). ROYAL HEADACHE keeps your hips swinging while you're out there singing. Listen to this and learn something.

TV SLIME – *Flying Fuck* **EP (self-released)**
This record made this list 'cause the single song on the B-side ("Severed") is probably one of the best punk rock songs I've ever heard. It's angry, and creepy, but somehow still makes you wanna dance. Recorded at Electrical Audio here in Chicago, it's got a *massive* drum sound and pounding bass, both of which complement the straight up guitars-as-noise wall of distortion and feedback. It reminds me of the weird art-damaged, seedy punk scene of places like the Mutiny and Lyon's Den in Chicago during the early '00s that nurtured and produced such bands as FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS, TYRADES, and THE WURST. All of that is tied with the old-school Chicago punk sound of the '80s; there are some perfectly executed, straight up, NAKED RAYGUN-esque yelps on this thing! Ya got me, fellas.

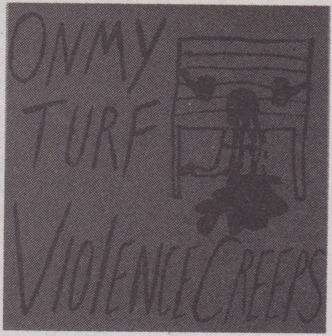
Q – *Recqrd* **EP (Lumpy)**
Short, fast, pissed. They replace every "o" in their song names with "q" for effect. I love affectation. This is the hardcore record I wanted all year.

VIOLENCE CREEPS – *On My Turf* **EP (VeeCee)**
I haven't lived in the Bay for a little over a year now, but I can still say with some degree of certainty that VIOLENCE CREEPS is the best band in the region. And even on wax, they manage to prove it. Songs that feel like they're falling apart, riff by riff. People who seem like they're losing their minds, moment by moment. On "On My Turf," I'm not quite sure if Amber is singing about trying to find someone to kill, or to fuck. And I don't care to ask or find out. Either way, the hunt is on. This record is the sound of violence creeping, off the needle, through your speakers, and into your life.

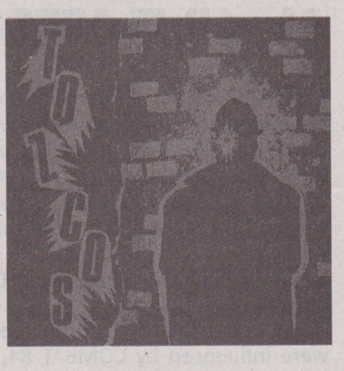
VEIL – Demo CS (self-released)
St. Louis had a great year this year when it came to music, that's for sure. This band, featuring members of DOOM TOWN, SHAVED WOMEN, and LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS put out this short blast of heavy-yet-melodic punk rock that had me at the first riff. Any band that Ashley Hohman sings in is going to be good. You'd do well getting this tape and remembering that fact.

FUCK SS – Demo CS (World Gone Mad)
If I could book a show at the Mutter Museum in Philly I would put this local band on the bill. This tape is fucking out there unsettling. The vocals creep me out, but mesmerize me all the same. This is another band that I would love to see live. I have no idea where they're coming from, what their plans are, or what the context of this release is, but I don't give a fuck. I hope this is what punk sounds like in the future. I hope they become the new DISCHARGE, or SUBURBAN LAWNS, or JOY DIVISION, or whatever band the next trend of punk wants to ape. Rip off someone your own age. There are talented fucking people doing mindblowing shit right now.

CONEHEADS – ***L.P.1 Aka 14 Year Old High School PC-Fascist Hype Lords Rip Off Devo For The Sake Of Extorting $$$ From Helpless Impressionable Midwestern Internet Peoplepunks*** **LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / International Players Club)**
I'm not going to write about this because everyone else in the world has. But yeah, it's a fucking amazing record and CONEHEADS are a fucking amazing band. Also, don't be an idiot and pay a ton of money for it. Just order it from the band, ya drangus.



STARING PROBLEM – *Long Winter* CS (self-released)
This long-running Midwest goth-y post-punk band finally released some new stuff this year. The vinyl is in pressing plant purgatory, but this tape (which comes with a bonus track) more than makes up for it. This is the first material released with their "new" bassist Cole, and also has the addition of synth, which fills out the sometimes-too-sparse sound they've had for years. It's obvious that they went to a real studio to record, and didn't just do it with a friend who is really good at the job but doesn't have a good room. Also, the drumming is so tight on this you might figure it to be a drum machine.



ROTTEN RON READY *is a reviewer and radio host for* MRR.

Top tens. So restricting. So many rules, man. Punk's about freedom. Freedom from the man. Freedom to ride our machines. Freedom from hassles. Why do you need someone to tell you what to like? This is in no particular order. NO ORDER.

L.O.T.I.O.N. – *Digital Control and Man's Obsolescence* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
I once did beer bongs in the parking lot of a MINISTRY show. I saw DEVO for the first time last year. I used to see GWAR a lot in the early '90s. This sounds nothing like those bands.

KORROSIVE – *The Kaaos B-Sides* flexi 7" (Nightrider / Shithammer)
I think there are as many honkies in Oakland as in Sweden these days.

BENNY AND THE ROIDS – Demo CS (self-released)
This sounds soooo much like old L.A. punk that Karla "Maddog" Barrett should be playing drums.

POWER – *Electric Glitter Boogie* LP (Cool Death)
Aussie hard rock. Teenage. Dirt weed. Warm cans of beer. Cruising in my buddy YDE's (Pronounced "Whitey's") Dodge Dart with the enormous swazie I drew on the interior (he was not stoked). Good kids. Bad intentions.

TOZCOS – *Existencia Aturdida* EP (Verdugo)
Why is California punk so much better than punk from anywhere else? I'm sorry for your state.

CROWN COURT – *Ruck And Roll* EP (American Oi! / Longshot / Rebellion)
Clap your feet. Stamp your hands. The best boot party all year.

AUSENCIA – *Sombra de Exilio* EP (Discos MMM / Verdugo)
The best demo songs on vinyl. Oi! your face.

SEXFACE – *Village Life* EP (Distort Reality)
This got a shitty review here. Fuck you!

BROKEN TALENT – *Rules No One* LP (Floridas Dead)
It's a reissue. So what? Blood Slut!

MOMMY – Demo CS (Electric Assault)
No one gets in. Stay out!!!

R.I.P. "Philthy Animal" Taylor

SHIT ZOO *plays in FRANKY and PIG DNA and reviews records for* MRR.

2015 was fine. I'm not really sure when it started and I'm not entirely convinced it's ending just yet, but I tried to pick through my foggy brain to remember what really stuck out. One can only hear/retain so much. The rest of the time you just want to listen to the embarrassing guilty pleasure shit you always listen to. What's important is that, in my opinion, SPETSNAZ is still better than everything else. Their set at Cacophonie Nights in November embodied everything I want in noise; it was intense, disorienting, and simultaneously intentional and unhinged. I managed to escape California this summer and found myself in Neo-Portland, so expect more noisy junk from here in the coming year. The two nights of Cacophonie Vol. 1 went remarkably well, certainly better than we could have hoped, so expect Vol. 2 in 2016 (definitely, maybe). Anyhow, on with the point of this thing. TOP TEN IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER, no real order OK?>?

ABORTICIDIO / LICKER – *Tex-Mex Nuclear Noise Pop Punkers* split flexi EP (Torture Garden Picture Company)
Well, this is atrocious and perfectly so. ABORTICIDIO continues to charm the shit out of me, and LICKER holds up their end too. It is exactly what it says it is.

AKKA – *Four Beliefs* EP (Insane Punk)
Raw anarcho crust with one of the most intense vocalists I've seen in a long time. Somehow, AKKA walks the fence between inspirational and desperately tragic. This is probably my number one record if push came to shove.

BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Eleven minutes of bottled anxiety and rage. Rarely does hardcore sound so claustrophobic, spiteful, and utterly dissatisfied.

C – *Dear Fuckin' Shit All Fascists + 2* LP (Hardcore Survives)
I almost forgot that this came out this year, since the CD was released in 2014. C includes members of CONFUSE and STAGNATION, and is like early CRASS with noisier guitars. Of course the answer is yes.

DISORDER / STAGNATION – *UK vs. Japan Noize Core Wars* split EP (Strong Mind Japan)
OK, I didn't expect this: these are three of my favorite DISORDER songs this side of *Under the Scalpel Blade.* Meanwhile, STAGNATION continues to release some of the best noisecore around. A split made in heaven or hell or whatever.

EXIT ORDER – *Take the Bait* EP (Side Two)
I said this a few months ago in my review: "unrepentantly relentless" and "like an anarcho-tinged hardcore VICE SQUAD." Also "Arghh. Very good." I was, and remain, very eloquent.

LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
Haunting guitar leads that get "CRISIS-esque" thrown around, but if the show fits... LA MISMA has always stood out to me for their energy, but on this LP I'm won over by their merging of melody and urgency without ever feeling complacent or exceedingly tuneful.

LEBENDEN TOTEN – ***Stagnation Fragmentation*** **CS (Whispers in Darkness)**
This is the first new LEBENDEN TOTEN release in years, and they remain better than your/my/our bands. Seven tracks that split between the manic 1-2s and the mid-tempo goth-noise that only this assembly can seem to pull off convincingly.

LIFE CHAIN – ***No More Bloom*** **flexi 7" (Dark Raids / Imminent Destruction)**
Hypnotic bursts of noise and crust, with gull-like wails of vocals eking through. This band is absolutely phenomenal live.

SOW THREAT – ***Decontrol*** **EP (Imminent Destruction)**
Bomb blasts and thunderous rumbling stench on side A, with an epic anarcho punk on side B. An obvious reference point is SORE THROAT, but there's also some nods to DOOM and Japanese loud night crusties. The guitar leads on side A are my favorite part, cutting right through the thick blown-out fog.

FUCK TEN, HERE'S ELEVEN:
FRENZY – ***Disconnected*** **EP (Hardcore Survives)**
TBH I haven't exactly heard this yet. I've heard most of it, presumably, at their tour kickoff show; it was great. I like everything about/from FRENZY and I'm annoyed I haven't gotten a copy of this yet so fuck off I'm putting it here.

Tapes: THE DARK / CHAOS TRIBE / MUTANT ITCH / CITY FUCKERS / NO PEACE / FUNDAMENTAL / VERMIN / DAME / CORPSPAZM / EXIT DUST

Reissues: DISCLOSE / ULTRA-VIOLENT / TOŽIBABE / PART 1

Ten is arbitrary, so this is a bunch of other stuff: LASTSENTENCE / VOĈO PROTESTA – split EP / L.O.T.I.O.N. – *Digital Control and Man's Obsolescence* LP / ELECTROCUTIONER – *The Blood of the Pig Must Flow in the Street* EP / SLIMY MEMBER – EP / STRESS SS – *Fest* EP / MOMMY – *I Remember Them* EP / PIÑÉN – *Emancipación* EP / SADIST –*The Shadow of the Swastika* EP

Thanks. Look out for WWIII.

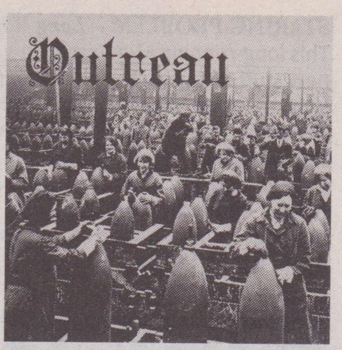
TURBO *is the only person who ever writes about Oi! in* MRR.

Happy New Year to all you krum-bums! The Top Ten issue of *MRR* is always my favorite. It stays in the bathroom the longest, so you know it must be good! I think last year's issue is still somewhere under the sink, sans cover and page-pruned, slathered in beard hair and sink-smegma. It should be stated that if I had my way, I would present a top 300 releases for 2015—it was a good year for Oi! and skin-related music. But I'm stuck to ten measly spots. So it goes! This is a country of laws and I will obey! But let it be known: Oi! trumps all. Everything else in these pages should be labeled 11-20. Always remember, never forget: We rule, ok?!

ANGER FLARES – ***Keeps On Burning*** **LP (Randale)**
Long-running Japanese boot boys bring the party on their fifth full-length. This is two-finger, beer-spilling, bounce and shout music. Listen to this and get united!

OUTREAU – ***Double Hate*** **EP (Une Vie Pour Rien?)**
One of the Gang's favorite bands right now. Like an anti-social rain cloud, OUTREAU brings the gloom. Along with RIXE below, OUTREAU is one of the newer French bands drawing from the CAMERA SILENS / KOMINTERN SECT side of French punk. Even if you don't like Oi! you'll like this.

RIXE – ***Coups Et Blessures*** **EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)**
This shit is so simple and catchy. The bass is fuzzed-out and heavy. The toms plod along with it and all the vocals sound like gang vocals. This shit makes me want to learn French so I can sing along. "Infatigables" has a guitar solo that makes me want to hit the lights and push over my fridge. You can also two-step to this, if you'd like.



CROWN COURT – ***Ruck And Roll*** **EP (American Oi! / Longshot / Rebellion) and** ***The English Disease*** **EP (Rebellion)**
What you have here is two EPs of the NWOBOi! If you are looking for melody or handclaps or piano in your punk look elsewhere. This is future brickwall classic stuff. Lace up your boots, tuck in your shirt, wipe the smile off your face and go walk thru a bolted door. Oi!

RECONQUESTA – ***Recupera El Que Et Pertany*** **LP (Disco Nightmare / See You)**
Great debut full-length from these Catalan skinheads. They say they were influenced by COMBAT 84, but these dudes don't ape anyone. Their sound is heavy and full of swagger with rock'n'roll leads, and the vocalist Guillem has a great cadence that goes beyond "catchy." This is a memorable LP. Oi! per Catalunya!

GIMP FIST – ***The Last Stand*** **LP (Sunny Bastards)**
You can't always be a hardass. I can't at least. Sometimes I *want* vocal harmony and piano and even...sigh...a ska-break. But don't confuse GIMP FIST for a silly band (they're not SHANDY). If you're a fan of COCK SPARRER or VANILLA MUFFINS (who ain't?) you're already a fan of theirs.

LAST CRUSADE – **LP (Longshot Music / Rebellion)**
Sadly LAST CRUSADE is done! But before they split they turned their outstanding demo into a great EP and dropped this 9-song LP. What I appreciate about LAST CRUSADE is their devotion to this scene. I believe these dudes like and listen to Oi! in their spare time. At least that's how it comes across on record. Their sound is rooted in the classics (plus TEMPLARS and ALTERNATE ACTION) but is still fresh and inspired. Better to leave the public wanting more than overfed and bored. Perfect album.

OFFENSIVE WEAPON – ***The Nightmare Returns*** **LP (Hostile Class Productions)**
The torch of '80s American Oi! is held high by OFFENSIVE WEAPON. Patriotic and proud is the message. I've got an Alpha with an American flag above a Gadsden. How couldn't I dig this record? Plus they cover "New Glory" by YDL. Modern Classic.

RAZORCUT – ***Rise Again*** **LP (Longshot / Rebellion)**
Hard and driving Oi! from Australia. Imagine MARCHING ORDERS (Al White does vocals for both bands) with female backing and you're on the right track. There is an almost metallic edge to the guitars on this LP that makes it stand up straighter than other records on this list and gives it a solid "Australian sound." A serious release.

TOP DOG – ***Welcome to My World*** **EP (Rebellion)**
No muss, no fuss, just puuuure impact! Oi! can devolve into boring cliché and it's a testament to the power of TOP DOG that they can write a song called "Clockwork Warrior" in 2015 and make it a smashing rager. The song "Botchergate" is the winner of the EP though, and demands multiple listens. Great record by a great new band.

Other shit I thought was great: HARRINGTON SAINTS – *Fish and Chips* 10" / the WOLVERINES – *Blood in the Sand* digital EP / CHARLEY FEW – *The Few, The Proud* CS / TRADITIONALS – *Tried & True* LP / the SULTANS – *Wobbly Oi!* LP / SWEET FUCK ALL – Demo CS

VIKTOR VARGYAI *writes a column for* MRR.

BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Never been to Barcelona, have no real idea what nihilism is and I don't even know who the Spanish prime minister or the mayor of Barcelona are. How do cops behave there, how do people live there? No clue. What I know is that BARCELONA made this record and this is the best hardcore record of 2015. It's aggressive, radikal, brave, soaked in noise and mind pounding riffs, and I doubt it's nihilistic. It's quite the opposite. Does this music solve their problems? Probably not, still they made all the efforts to prepare it this brilliant. This is existentialism: to wake up every day, do, fail and wake up again. This is raw power, a hypnotic album that could only be measured against itself. This record evokes thoughts of separating yourself from society to be alone and free. It's a recording of the coolest private matters.

ÖNKIÍRTÁS – Demo CS (Pizza Days)
The band's name is self-eradication, their demo cover—depicting a snail climbing on a razor—refers to *Apocalypse Now* and their music is pure brutality, well-planned structure of madness executed perfectly while the super weird singing makes listening to their songs a really awkward experience. The lyrics are as desperate as they are angry; the music sounds metallic but then it turns out that it is just heaviness reduced from everyday hatred. This is a weapon that will be useful in the battle of Us vs. Them. All hail brutality.

PIŃÉN – *Emancipación* EP (self-released)
A punk mind under a rusty chainsaw. I bought this record because of the hype, without hearing the band in advance of the purchase and I did not regret it. Members are connected to the band BARCELONA and in one description it was stated that their credo is to live as free as possible. Here they perform this desire of liberation within quite minimalist punk riffs, rudimentary beats and a lot of anger. A lot of anger that is transformed so well onto this record, it's in every movement of theirs that makes noise, it's even in the interludes. This is a fucking great punk record because it dares to be punk and merely tries to write songs to state a fuck you.

PISS – *Pubertala Uppror* EP (Static Age)
Three immigrants surviving punk in Berlin. I love these guys and this is a record that finally lives up to their live performances. Sharp distortion fills the record wall to wall, sometimes with feelings of fumbling, other times with the desire to burn the world down. Through this noise the Swedish/English screams sound totally otherworldly, haunted punk minds screaming because the world has to know. Tempos pushed to the max leading the music into chaotic parts where the guitar realizes its chance and starts to make mess. This record is Garanterat Mangel.

NO – *Treating People Like They Don't Exist* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
NO is (even through now they only were) my favorite band of the New Wave of British Hardcore. This is their final LP which is just as good as the previous ones and it also adds a new color to the whole perspective. The pace of the music blurs together all the songs creating one compact album, the halts in the songs' structure restrain the music's energy and make the record feel like a struggle. The staccato in their great flow makes me realize how fast they were all along and now they have to breath for a second; still they go on and run. Even the title of the record points to this battle with the normal world. This record sounds like it was created by people who can function in this real world but as they move along, their hate towards people grows to a point where they have to treat them as they don't exist. Although this record does not make humanity vanish, artistically it provides the feelings of freedom within complete alienation.

LIME CRUSH – *Graveyard* EP (Fettkakao)
These Austrian cool kids appeared and laid down the beat, clamor, kindness and coolness of their punk agenda. No wave disco punk that is easily danceable, essential punk songs played with desperation. This record reminds me that being punk is so cool and to be secretly cooler than others is really, really fun. You can lie the best when you know the truth.

MYSTIC INANE – *Ode to Joy* EP (Negative Jazz)
MYSTIC INANE continues their great mission that is making punx like me very happy. The guitar-freakout-heavy music that is laid on a sort of minimalist but kinda tight background and the vocal nonsense has lost none of its charm with this new record. Although their music would be great on a full-length, even within the length of a 7" they can expand enough of their ideas to be convincing. At the same time, I do want more. Their nihilistic, grease approach to playing post-good hardcore post-punk sounds like FALL riffs placed on mid-tempo hardcore bands playing kraut rock. No stomping, all crawling. I love this band.

PIG DNA – *Mob Shity* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
If punk is a drug, then PIG DNA is heroin. And it's not only the joy that this record brings but the route you have to take from drinking a sip of beer to shooting up heroin in a junkie squat. Unlike what I would feel if I were addicted to a substance, I'm glad I have reached the point where I can appreciate PIG DNA. But what is there to not appreciate? This record has its own mythology, its own slang, rules, universe. Here noise is the riff and tempo is the space where music happens. It's fragile hardcore approached from the direction of noise. This record is a beautiful mess.

DAWN OF HUMANS – *Slurping at the Cosmos Spine* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
One of the advantages of internet culture is that you can find a band's live show interesting even if you have never attended any of their shows. I'm with the disadvantaged so I listen to bands as if I were blind. Even then this record would be crazy. While everyone purposely wants to be loud, full blown, the most of the most, here comes a record that is not finished, turned down. It's a draft, it's minimalistic, it has to be finished by the listener. There's an idea behind it and the band is bold enough to carry on with it. It does not give everything for the listener but relies on the listener's capabilities. It gives the idea that hardcore is not a static thing but a sketched up frame that is waiting for punx to fill it with content.

LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
This is a last minute pick because my initial pick was against the rules. To be honest while going through this list I asked myself why LA MISMA wasn't on it. Their ultra catchy, toxic pogo punk is great, a vertiginous mix of creeping guitars, raging vocals and the filth of a metropolis. I love punk records that sound like someone constantly knocking over shelves filled with glasses and rusty metal pieces.

ARTO HIETIKKO *edits the long-running Finnish fanzine* Toinen Vaihtoehto.

Making a Top Ten list of only ten releases was not necessarily much easier than making separate lists for 7"s and 12"s, I noticed. And as always, I had too little time to think about the list. Once again it seems that La Vida Es Un Mus is my favorite label, as there are four LVEUM releases on my list. I can't help it: all of them were so good that I couldn't leave any of them out (congratulations, Paco!). I got the KOHTI TUHOA and PARANOID 12"s in my hands just before the deadline, but it was enough to be convinced that they both belong to the list. They are that good.

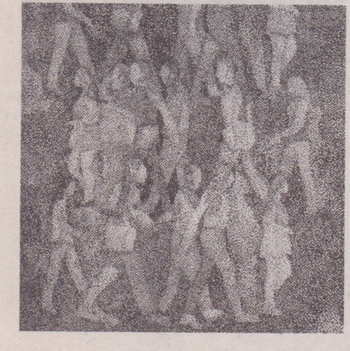
On the whole, 2015 was a pretty good year for DIY punk/HC, even though I feel like there were more top-class releases a couple of years ago. But as the flood of excellent punk reissues just keeps coming and coming, it's possible that I miss many great new bands when I spend some of my record money on the golden oldies. Which kind of sucks because I *hate* people who are stuck in the '80s, who keep on repeating how glorious the '80s were and how nothing good has been done since. I lived through the whole fucking '80s, and so many things in the punk scene *sucked* compared to this moment. I could make a long list of things that are now better.

Then there are those people who would love bands like ORDEN MUNDIAL *if* they were an '80s band. But since they are a current band they naturally cannot be good or worth listening to. "It's not genuine any more...punk is not what it used to be...bands don't have 'it' any more... Oh, those were the days....current punk sucks...modern day punk is just Green Day, where did hardcore go?...It all died in 1979...It all died in 1986...It's all dead...the scene sucks... blah blah..." *Bullshit!* I don't even want to talk to anyone who thinks that. Punk is here and now, and we have loads of top-class punk/HC bands at this very moment, as all these Year End Top Ten lists show, once again.

DAWN OF HUMANS – *Slurping at the Cosmos Spine* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
DAWN OF HUMANS' previous releases have sounded very interesting, as well as a bit confusing, weird, and disturbed—in a pleasant way, of course. I knew to expect noisy hardcore punk done in a peculiar way, but on this LP they took me by surprise and really knocked me out. Certain *Cacophony*-era RUDIMENTARY PENI influences are obvious, but there is so much more happening in these songs. One could easily imagine CAPTAIN BEEFHEART himself smiling in his grave. While so many punk bands unimaginatively just repeat the same old formula again and again, DAWN OF HUMANS choose another direction. Every song is unique, yet they by no means sound arty or pretentious. In an interesting way, this LP sounds both funny and frightening at the same time, due to the disturbed vocals. It creates some interesting contrasts, and is not easy to classify, which is always a big plus. I'm so happy that there are bands like DAWN OF HUMANS.

PARANOID – *Satyagraha* LP (D-Takt & Råpunk / Konton Crasher)
What a terrific blend of noisecore, D-beat, etc., with influences drawn from every corner, from Scandinavia to Japan. Elements like reverbed vocals and distortion are familiar, but the songs are much more varied than they used to be in this genre. PARANOID is definitely one of those bands succeeding in pushing the D-beat formula in new directions. A storming album.

KOHTI TUHOA – *Rutiinin Orja* 12" (Svart)
Bombastic, noisy, chaotic, full-gallop metal hardcore punk with full-on distortion and screaming vicious lunatic vocals driving right through the skull. *Hear Nothing See Nothing Say Nothing* meets *Behind The Realms Of Madness* and *Defeat Of Civilization*. Hell, I was supposed to include KIELTOLAKI LP on my Top Ten, but this 12" dropped them off the list. It's that good.



BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Aggressive, brutal, desperate hardcore with unrelentingly violent riffs and ear-ripping vocals. Those vocals indeed! Yeah, I happen to love FIRMEZA 10 as well... Like their contemporaries ORDEN MUNDIAL, BARCELONA play raw HC which is strangely both traditional (yes, you can hear DISCHARGE underneath the surface) and innovative. Some people complain that punk does not sound dangerous any more (blah blah), but yes it does, *if* you listen to the right bands. Try BARCELONA, for example, you pathetic whiners!

CADAVER EM TRANSE – *Camaleão* EP (Iron Lung)
CADAVER EM TRANSE are possibly my favorite current post-punk band. I loved their LP (as well as the flexi), and on this 7" EP they certainly keep the standard up. Everything in their songs seems to fit perfectly into its place, and they really know how to use the best elements of the genre and make impressive songs. You can hear the KILLING JOKE influences, but they don't cross over the line. Unlike many other bands under the name of this current post-punk revival they are not "goth" or "death rock," but punk.

SANG – *Món Oblidat* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Somewhere between BARCELONA and UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE, which means ferocious, raw hardcore punk loaded with a good amount of feedback and distortion, not just relying on a fast tempo. SANG is angry as hell, and on top of that they've got a terrific, venomous female vocalist. I'm floored.

NO – *Treating People Like They Don't Exist* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
Merciless, passionate, aggressive, chaotic in-your-face hardcore. Hardcore, yes, but the songs are definitely far from being dull. Instead they are full of unexpected twists and turns. Every now and then, you have to struggle to hear how the riff was actually formed and how to keep up with it. This kind of chaos keeps listeners on their toes. There are lots of great new hardcore bands in the UK at the moment, and I really appreciate that many (the best?) of them don't slavishly try to repeat some old UK sound, but instead find new influences.

RITUAL CONTROL – *Inoculation* EP (Sabotage)
I loved their first EP, and was a bit surprised when I heard *Inoculation* for the first time because to my ears it sounded different from the first 7". However, the more I listened to it the more I liked it. It's powerful, heavy-hitting, pummeling hardcore. Crushing material. Very, very impressive.

ERA OF FEAR / ΠΑΝΔΗΜΙΑ – split LP (Dark Liquid / Eye5 / Scarecrow)
Two of my favorite Greek bands on the same split. Excellent post-punk on the ERA OF FEAR side and fine, dark anarcho spirited punk on the ΠΑΝΔΗΜΙΑ (or PANDEMIA) side (unfortunately their farewell release, which is a pity). Overall my favorite split release of the year. Dark and melancholic, and yet at the same time so punk.

VASTUSTA – Demo CS (self-released)
Strongly influenced by '82 style Finnish HC. The songs are short, fast, tight, angry, and to the point. The tape came out in the beginning of 2015 and since then I have been drooling for a 7", but they still haven't released any vinyl. When I asked them to play at my 50th Birthday fest, they warned me that they only had a five-minute set. That's how long this five-song demo (one song being just an intro) lasts. I didn't mind, I love this band so much. Nevertheless, VASTUSTA is definitely not the only great brand new Finnish HC band—PERUSKOULU, HÄPEÄ, KOURISTUS, VISTO, and YHTEENOTTO are all top-class bands as well, to name just a few, so take note.

Bubbling under: KIELTOLAKI – *Vapauden Illuusio* 12" (Feral Ward) / HÄPEÄ – Demo CS / RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* EP / JUGGLING JUGULARS – *Forward* 12" / LAPINPOLTHAJAT – *III* / SUDOR – *Enamorado De La Muerte Juvenil* 12" / CRUTCHES – *FörlOrAD* LP / VAASKA – *Todos Contra Todos* LP / SUICIDAS/TRANCE – split EP / ORDEN MUNDIAL – *El Nuevo Sonido Balear* EP

BEN TROGDON *played drums in IVY and plays drums in JJ DOLL. He also makes the fanzine* Nuts!

Sup, everybody! Hope you had a good holiday! Hope you feelin' OK. Hope 2016 is alright. I like music that feels alive. Music that sounds raw, different and weird. Music that's made from the heart.

RIK AND THE PIGS – "Pig Sweat/Feed the Animal (Ode to Ted)" 45 (Total Punk)
Some nasty-ass rockin' shit! Sounds like '77 metal punk—like hardcore never happened, like a nasty heavy metal belch.

CCTV – *Quiet* EP (Lumpy)
I love the vocals in this band. She sings like she's kind of bored, but I know she's not. I saw 'em live and she was having so much fun that she took off her shirt and was dancing. The feeling was tough and free.

STAND UP – Demo CS (self-released)
This demo sounds interesting and organic, but it's still def American Hardcore. It's a little thrashy, but not cheezy. And great guitar tone! "Working Class Abuse" is the jam.

MOMMY – *I Remember Them* EP (Toxic State)
I kind of think this band is rockin' slam poetry? They are so unique and also so punk. By absorbing this record you're cracking the brain and peeking inside to see what it's like to be in a person whose brain has never been peeked inside of before. The drumming is on a constant roll and it makes things exciting.

BLAZING EYE – *Ways to Die* CS (self-released)
Satanic death pogo to hell. The song "Ways to Die" has cool lyrics, but a little depressing.

MUFF DIVERS – *No Muff Too Tuff* EP (Lumpy)
I laughed out loud the first time I heard the song "Spooky Man"! It's some real life shit! And it's sung in such a way that makes you have real emotions. The music is sped up, hi-pitched, crazy punk pop that's super dorky. Much love.

VANITY – "Yer Fucking Boring/There's the Door" 45 (Katorga Works)
I'm a sucker for tough sounding pop rock. "Yer Fucking Boring" is a hit!

I also really liked: the DAWN OF HUMANS LP, the CONEHEADS LP and all the cool rex, punx and freak weird world out there! LA MISMA, BRICKLAYER, NANDAS, AJAX, THE REAL COST, *Cretins of Distortion* and lots more!

Please send my ass as much music as you can think of and I will mostly likely listen to it: BCT / P.O. Box 1959 / New York, NY 10013

DAVE HYDE *is a frequent contributor to* Terminal Boredom *and the author of the new fanzine* Tone Deaf Rooster.

JJ DOLL – Demo CS (self-released)
Surely, any tears that were shed when the GOSPELFUCKERS broke up dried quickly when AGENT ORANGE emerged. And such is the case with IVY's reformation as JJ DOLL. Sara switched from guitar to vocals and they whipped up a new batch of songs with the same great hooks, reckless solos, and *that* fucking guitar sound. This demo, released mere hours before the *MRR* YETT submission deadline, is off the charts good.

LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
New York's LA MISMA turned in this gem, relentlessly catchy and endlessly interesting. I have actually said to myself, "So as not to burn out on this one, how about you go a week without listening to it," and failed wildly, pogoing around my apartment, strumming along on my air guitar. Just a brilliant, unique album for which I am unable to provide a description that does it justice.

IVY – *A Cat's Cause, No Dogs Problem* EP (Katorga Works)
This was a band that just got better, tighter, and took chances that paid off. By the end, they were unbeatable, one of the best bands anywhere. IVY released this EP in the late spring followed shortly by a heartbreaking breakup on the eve of their US tour. I refer you back to Grace's review of this in MRR #389, which said it better than I can. For a postscript, see (1.) above.

STEFAN CHRISTENSEN – *Israel (It's More of the Same)* CS (self-released)
A full-length cassette release exploring the dark intersection of noise and distortion and the vampire blues. On the surface, songs range from acoustic and folky to brooding walls of feedback, but there is a tension and melancholy that ties this all together into a cohesive release. Very much in the spirit of early Kiwi noise acts like DEAD C and the works of Jim Shepard. Not to be overlooked.

KALEIDOSCOPE – *Volume 1* CS (Interzone)
Deconstructing hardcore via tape machines in an underground lab somewhere in Brooklyn, KALEIDOSCOPE is one of the more exciting projects to emerge in recent memory. In spite of the typical goal of HC studio sessions to make something that is vérité, this incorporates samples, field recordings, and all manner of recording tricks to create something above and beyond, where the mechanism of production is an integral part of the result.

MOZART – *The Tick* CS (self-released)
MOZART is the first band on my list that is not local to me in some sense, and one of only two I've not yet had the pleasure of seeing live, so my love is based purely on this cassette. It's been my Walkman companion as I journey around my city, mad, mad, mad at the world, and provides some comfort that I'm not alone. This is another release with *that* guitar sound; it'll wake you like a slap to the face when it kicks in. Relentless and awesome.

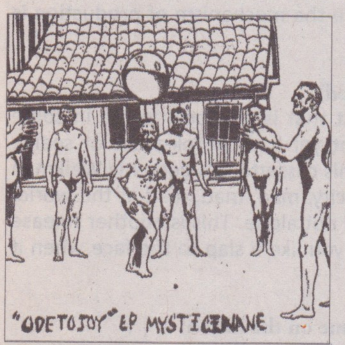
COLD BEAT – *Into the Air* LP (Crime on the Moon)
One cannot live by harsh and dire music alone, and must sometimes also listen to beautiful, upbeat tunes. Although I am generally not a huge fan of "pop" (a truly meaningless term, sorry) nor of pure "noise" (equally awful descriptor, sorry) there is an area where the two overlap that is my happy place. Take "Cracks" with a *stuck in your head for weeks* chorus interrupted by a bout of white noise shredding. Oh my, I'm in heaven.

DAWN OF HUMANS – *Slurping at the Cosmos Spine* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
It often seems as though each DAWN OF HUMANS member is off in some isolated bunker playing their own songs until suddenly they merge and come into focus. A magic trick, *"The riff was behind your ear this whole time!"* Don't worry, if you don't get it immediately; give them some distance and come back…after a year long debate over the genius of this band, a friend recently texted me, "I get it now." A truly remarkable band.

CCTV – *Quiet* EP (Lumpy)
My copy says "Cat Callers Tortured Violently," how about yours? CCTV's single is the best of an impressive crop of records to come out of NWI this year. "Paranoia" is aces, an infectious, awesome gem of classic punk cut from the *Red Snerts* mold. The best.

MYSTIC INANE – *Ode to Joy* EP (Negative Jazz)
MYSTIC INANE had a couple of singles this year, plus one from PATSY, who shares a member, so I flipped a coin to pick this one for inclusion. You can't go wrong with any of these. A truly unique-sounding band whose only "comparables" are bands they don't sound like but who share the trait of not having peers (that is to say, MYSTIC INANE don't sound like SACCHARINE TRUST or SPIKE IN VAIN or MINUTEMEN but they draw the comparisons just because no one sounds like those bands either).

Honorable mentions: There were a ton of releases that I really loved that didn't make this list (BARCELONA, ORDEN MUNDIAL, NANDAS – *World* CS, HOME BLITZ, FLESH WORLD, CONEHEADS) and while we were instructed to stay tight to demo/vinyl output, I have been swimming in beautiful, awesome, inspiring fanzines this year and cannot turn in a year-in-review "best of" without at least mentioning some of them: *Glue* tour photozine by Alexis Gross, *Cretins of Distortion,* Romantic Story by Heather Benjamin, *Even Our Spit Shines Bright* by Sara Abruña, a variety of Papertown releases, Interzone zines (*Bacteria/You're Gonna Die*), and books by Emma Kohlmann, *Nuts!* and Oakland-based skate fanzine *Not Shit.*



GREG BENEDETTO *plays guitar in S.H.I.T. and is one of the organizers of Not Dead Yet in Toronto.*

I don't know what to make of punk going into 2016. When I read people's thoughts on punk, I generally get bummed out because everything is so surface level. But I also know that when I am surrounded by punks, I still have an awesome time. Such are the ups and downs of life. More living in the real world for 2016. More spreading the good word of Toronto's most excellent scene in 2016. Less staring at a screen. The following ten items enriched my life greatly this year. More of things like these. Next year this list will be full of releases by bands from Toronto like VCR, TRIAGE, MOLLOT, PROM NITE, WILD SIDE, DILETTANTES, THE BOYS, and more. Until then…

MUERTE – LP (Cabeza de Vaca / Cintas Pepe / SPHC)
This year confirmed something I came to believe back when the TERCER MUNDO 7" first appeared: Mexico City has one of the best punk scenes in the world, and is made up of some seriously smart, talented, and determined people. MUERTE's first LP confirms that they are one of the greatest bands that the Mexico City scene has produced. Live, they are one of my favorite bands, and this record delivers on the promise of their live show. It's angry, visceral, and melodic, featuring a mix of hardcore and post-punk with unparalleled intensity. One of the best nights I had this summer was driving down to Buffalo with a friend to catch these guys play a basement show. Do yourself a favor and search out the music made by this band and others from their scene.

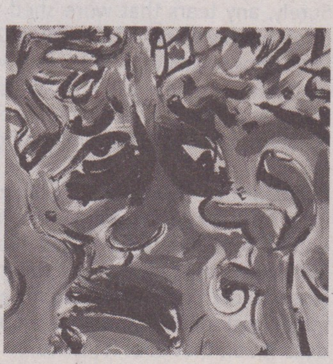
FUCK SS – Demo CS (World Gone Mad)
The name is the name. Some people think it's awful, others find it appropriately glib. Their stance, if you can get past the initial foolishness, is unequivocal. Awful noise in the best sense of those words; the noise always complements the band's intensity and never draws away from it. "Social Real Estate" is hands down one of the best tracks of the year. This was also one of many items released by World Gone Mad this year, a label that is finally doing justice to what's been bubbling up in Philly. It seems that for the last few years, Philly has had an ever-growing scene, manifesting in the likes of FUCK SS, SHEER MAG, BLANK SPELL, LATEX, CHONDRIA, HALDOL, and more. So while the FUCK SS demo might be my favorite release from that part of the world this year, Philly is a city to keep an eye on.

CONEHEADS – *L.P.1 Aka 14 Year Old High School PC-Fascist Hype Lords Rip Off Devo For The Sake Of Extorting $$$ From Helpless Impressionable Midwestern Internet Peoplepunks* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / International Players Club)
I'll be honest: I didn't spin this record all that much, even though it's great. That said, what I love about this CONEHEADS record is its context. To many, this record might seem goofy or silly, but the reality is that CONEHEADS are maybe the most serious band in punk in 2015. They have an unwavering ethic. They are steadfast about keeping the cost of their releases down and achieve it by being as DIY as possible. They aim to make the world around them better, in that they won't really leave home. They don't respond to the hype, and they won't let you buy into what they do. They want diehards only and they want things to be cheap / free for those diehards. They use their music as a means to scathingly critique the world around them. If hardcore is an outsider mindset, I believe this band embodies it through and through.

ROYAL HEADACHE – *High* LP (Distant & Vague / What's Your Rupture)
I love the first ROYAL HEADACHE LP so much that this one was hard to get into at first. Eventually, it grew on me to the point of being maybe more enjoyable than the first. It's that perfect sophomore LP, more "mature," more "thoughtful"—or so it seems. More than any other, the track "Garbage" resonated with me. As I age in punk, I start to see patterns repeat themselves while I try to fight against becoming an archetype. This song is essentially Shogun's response to being talked down to by people who think themselves more punk than him. It's funny to realize that as you get older in punk, you just gotta keep doing your own thing for your own reasons. Fuck haters. They're not punk, they're just scum.

THE DARK – *I* CS & *II* CS (self-released)
L.A. is a bit of a different planet to me. The punk scene there has always been a hard scene to cut into. But for the last few years, a big, vibrant scene has appeared there. Things like Silenzio Statico, Música Para La Destrukcion, and East 7th have helped spread the LA punk gospel, and that's how I stumbled onto THE DARK. A track showed up somewhere on social media, I saw it was from L.A., and I ended up diving down the rabbit hole. Featuring members of SADICOS and KRUEL, these demos are incredible, driving, '80s Japanese style HC punk with a bit of a metallic edge. Through some magical efforts and with the help of friends, we were able to get them and SADICOS up for Not Dead Yet Fest, and they absolutely delivered live. So much excellent punk has come out of L.A. the last few years, and THE DARK continues the charge.

LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
NYC has consistently provided some of the best, most original HC punk in the last several years. On this LP, you hear LA MISMA growing into a band that can use pace and melody to their advantage. It's biting, it's bouncing, it's a fucking ferocious record. When I first saw them a few years back, "militaristic" was a great way to describe them. That description still fits here, but there's also a groove that defies it. As a fan



of their earlier material, I couldn't be happier with how this turned out. If you're unfamiliar with what's going on in NYC, you need to start paying a bit more attention. Support Toxic State. Support Death Traitors. Support Dripper World. Support Papertown Company. Support punks who don't capitulate to the bullshit of the outside world. Much admiration for this whole scene.

BARCELONA – ***Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona*** **12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)**
This record came completely out of left field. I didn't know that GLAM had dissolved. There was no demo that preceded it. But when I heard it, I was floored. The city of Barcelona has for many years had a scene that has been the envy of the entire world. It seems bold to take the name of the city as the band's, but it works. The artwork is absurd and unlike much that has come before it. It is remarkable how rage transcends language. La Vida Es Un Mus deserves extreme kudos again this year for remaining one of punk's top labels—not only by providing releases by great bands like BARCELONA but also by ensuring that some of North America's best get to European hands. LVEUM is #1 in "punk you need to hear."

VAASKA – ***Todos Contra Todos*** **LP (Beach Impediment)**
Austin, one of my favorite cities in the U.S., is home to some of the best people and some of the best bands, including VAASKA. VAASKA offers hot & heavy DISCHARGE-influenced ponk fronted by Eddie Leal, who when not fronting VAASKA might be the funniest man in punk. This LP features some seriously sick artwork of a punk skeleton gang who are all wearing cool T-shirts. It doesn't hurt that this thing came out on Beach Impediment Records, arguably hardcore's best and most consistent label.

TENEMENT – ***Predatory Headlights*** **2xLP (Don Giovanni)**
Listening to this record, I wonder if TENEMENT had the intention of testing their listeners. A 2xLP in the spirit of *Zen Arcade* or *Double Nickels on the Dime, Predatory Headlights* pushes the definition of punk to its true edge. Prior to this record, TENEMENT always dabbled in the weird world of DIY pop. They can write a song no doubt, but they do much more than that here with tracks that meander, bordering on free jazz. If you've only heard their last LP, *Napalm Dream,* this record might be jarring. And if you want *Napalm Dream II,* it's here, but you might need to skip a couple of tracks (though I would advise against it). If you're familiar with the breadth of what TENEMENT has done, you will recognize that this is their opus. And goddamn if the guitars don't sound like actual buzzsaws.

DIÄT – ***Positive Energy*** **LP (Adagio830 / Iron Lung)**
For a long time, I knew nothing about DIÄT. They dropped two esoteric 7"s on Iron Lung Records that I enjoyed, but that was it. When I heard a cut off of this new LP, my ears perked up. Where the 7"s were straightforward and punchy, here the band displayed growth. A friend described this record as containing the best elements of post-punk. The lyrics are sardonic, the rhythms driving, the sonic textures interesting. It's a very precise record that in retrospect makes the 7"s feel like snippets of something much greater. Seeing them spin up the delay at the beginning of "Hurricane" in a live setting sealed the deal for me. I hope to see this band again before too much time passes. Write a manifesto. Write a shopping list.

In the honorable mention department: Shout out to the following bands for doing great things this year: LOCK, FIRING SQUAD, CONCEALED BLADE, BLAZING EYE, BLOOD PRESSURE, STRUTTER, BENNY AND THE ROIDS, LIFE FUCKER, DAME, CHONDRIA, CULT SYNDROME, PRESSING ON, DESENTERRADAS, UNION OF FAITH, REALIDAD, G.L.O.S.S., TETSU ARREY, RED DEATH, DAWN OF HUMANS, STICK TOGETHER, VANITY, CHAIN RANK, NO TOLERANCE, ZONE INFINIE, PARANOID, TURNSTILE, POWER, CHAIN OF FLOWERS, URANIUM CLUB, MERCY KILLINGS, LEATHER DADDY, PURE DISGUST, AGGRESSION PACT, SHEER MAG, 2X4, AJAX, SADIST, CCTV, EXIT ORDER, PISS, SANG, SUBURBAN HOMES, RIXE, RADIOACTIVITY, SYNDROME 81, BOLT THROWER and UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE.

JOE BRIGGS *is the author of* Brutalist Shimmy *fanzine and the co-host of the* Fullthrottlelazy *podcast. London punk, killing it, indeed.*

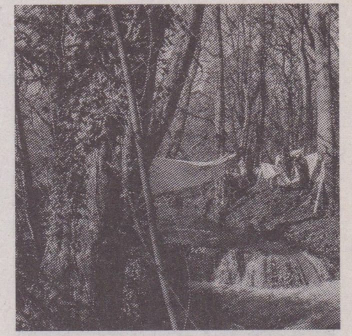
LA MISMA – ***Kanizadi*** **LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)**
Spidery guitar lines flickering razor-delicate and firm above a propulsive punk buzz and churn that canters and darts one moment, locks in to a deliberate traipsed groove the next. The vocals a cutting mixture of dark intonations and demonstrative snaps, vehement yelps; the lyrics a series of stark visions, enduring images bubbling up palpable and real, painting cities and societies, lives and hopes, in a few brief glowing strokes, opening them up and ripping into their radiant fetid guts as the song careers on.

DAWN OF HUMANS – ***Slurping at the Cosmos Spine*** **LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)**
Another NY-beat monster squirming its way out of the Nuke York depths. Long possessed of a transcendent live show, DAWN OF HUMANS transfers that energy to their first full-length. Scuzzy guitar dragged over pogo-thump rhythms runs *Slurping at the Cosmos Spine,* strapped up equally ready for an imbecilic slam dance or fresh aperture gouged into your third eye. The vocals squirting between snapping lizard-brain warbling and strained whinnies, inane whirling ditties with the cadence of playground taunts, deep dog-bitten threats, panicked jolts and spasms. Gnomic visions of a world in flux, half-glimpsed through a mucal veil. Oblique gerunds trailing off, DAWN OF HUMANS tricks out the scribbly essence of thought, coalescing and tearing, tumbling off into the ether. Jump-up music for aborted séances, busted headcult punks in primordial movement, dance moves and directions sucked greedily straight from the collective unconsciousness of the puerile choir immaterial.

OBNOX – ***Know America*** **LP (Ever/Never)**
Hip-hop is sick. Punk is sick. Stuff that combines the two generally ranges from the embarrassing to the impossibly shite. OBNOX smashes that barrier by crafting music that retains the gleaming essential core of both genres. One of three full-lengths released this year, *Know America* is a concept album about hijacking a radio station, shattering the asinine bullshit with deep noisy grooves, thundering noisy shakers, stumbling bitter jams, swimming in sludgy soul, tumbling in punk chaos. Unlike anything else (apart from the four other OBNOX records that have probably been released in the time you've been reading this).

PERSPEX FLESH – ***Ordered Image*** **12" (Static Shock)**
Dark and tempestuous hardcore, sweeping guitars building to chaos; beset by anxiety and paranoia, things spin in tight panicked circles, degenerating orbits, shivers crash into wild-eyed agitated bursts, divulging bitter secrets in painful spasms. Stomping with the unrelenting push of present terrors, underpinned by the throbbing ache and drone of inescapable dread, howling with the strain of living broken and sore.

NO FORM – **12" (Muscle Horse / Reagent)**
Five tracks of acute bitterness, flayed hardcore noise, a grisly clatter pitched somewhere in the barren abrasion/power hinterlands between HARRY PUSSY and MECHT MENSCH, but wholly its own, screeching and keening, pulsing and slamming, writhing and roaring. Freak-out upon



freak-out, scarifying glares and feedback flues. The long jam that eats up the whole of side B is a dangerous throb, building out of a bass line in the manner of less-spiritual, more-fucked-off LES RALLIZES DÉNUDÉS, hanging the flaying chaos around a simple axial point. A war trudge, beset by demons and lithe scuttling terrors, a monotonous process of bloodied bruised determination, a caustic drag through a mephitic bog. No release, no escape, no compromise, NO FORM.

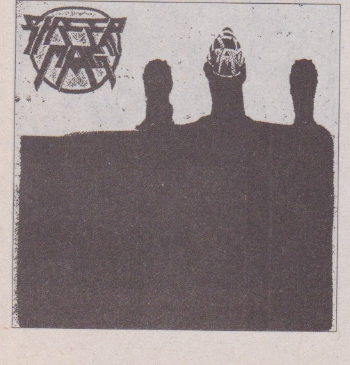
SHEER MAG – *II* 7" (Katorga Works / Static Shock / Wilsuns Recording Company)
A patina of dirt laid over classic rock riffs, like THIN LIZZY as a region rock band. Free bent outta shape, BENT OUTTA SHAPE dragged through with hooks. Shimmy swagger, rueful bad neighborhood blues. The diminutives and asides that pepper the lyrics add to the sharp familiarity they carry, second and first person, conversationally poetic, a distillation of times when you somehow managed to say the right thing. They assume you're conversant with certain knowledges, certain struggles. And these are often worn topics—the road, home, friendship, the fight, your fight—but they're worn in like scarred fists, discolored deformed couches, rusty cars with silly nicknames. They're worn with real living process and the battering winds of experience. These songs swallow you up in their world, they tell you to fuck off and hold you tight with the roughness of a true friend, they get you movin', whether it's out into the world or just onto to the dance floor.

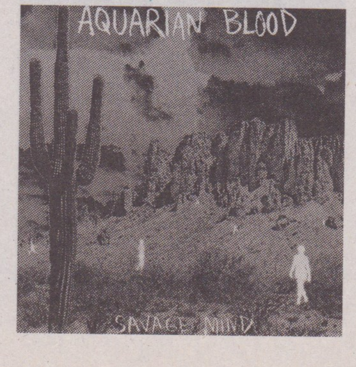
AQUARIAN BLOOD – *Savage Mind* EP (Goner)
Wild and windy garage punk, blown out in all the right places, three runaway rippers, nailed together from crumbling fuzz, swept through with urgent ghostly shiver. A perfect punk single.

THE WARDEN – *Cell Bars* EP (Lumpy)
Dirty elemental hardcore, jerking manically from catchy stomps to unhinged flipped-out seizures, all violence and frustration. Regressive and ugly, bouncing off the walls with the bullshit (jobs, bands, self-loathing, wankers) overcoming you and spilling out in this grubby slab of foul punk id.

MOMMY – Demo CS (Electric Assault)
Scuzzy salvos of lawless snarl, grim vignettes of tender human places, rudimentary torrents of noise clattering and rupturing, barking bruised and damaged and imbued with a feverish discomfort, an unavoidable hectic frailty.

G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)
Fierce as storms and tough as bike leathers, G.L.O.S.S. plays hardcore punk that makes you feel it like the first time, it's got that struggle-born uncomfortable realness, like ANOMALY's demo last year, that deep agony, that fearless kick and scathing punk swagger that transmutes pain into power, rage into revolution. Killer punk at its world-warping best. For people still struggling under the weighty pressures of the shite that G.L.O.S.S. take deadly aim at, this message from the future, from the ones who've in these five songs made a bright burning life outside society's shit, might just not be another way-cool demo among the cool demos, the rambling stream of punk releases, the hype and the backlash, the peaks and troughs in the tapes and the records trickling out of punk minds globally. For the ones who haven't found a place yet where they can feel tough and hard and unbeatable, or who have maybe just forgotten that that place exists, this could be so much more. This feels like the sort of thing that could save a fucking life.





Honorable mentions: NO – *Treating People Like They Don't Exist* 12" / CIANURO – Demo CS / CULT SYNDROME – demo CS / DREGS – Demo CS / EFIALTIS – Demo CS / SNOB – *Quit Your Job* EP / ROYAL HEADCHE – *High* LP / RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* EP / SOMA COMA – *Dust* LP / MUERTE – LP / Q – *Recqrd* EP / SUDOR – *Enamorado de la Muerte Juvenil* 12" / MOZART – *The Tick* CS / IVY – *A Cat's Cause, No Dogs Problem* EP / BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo En Barcelona* 12"

Highlights of the year: DIY Space for London opening, Static Shock Weekend, LA MISMA, VEXX, DAWN OF HUMANS, starting a band, punks is mates.

LAURA LANÇA *plays guitar in RAKTA and bass in CHROMA.*

This year was the worst of my life so far (but I always write this sentence when a year is wrapping up, so no worries). Being betrayed by yourself is never a good feeling, and this is probably how you come to know yourself better—or not. Who knows? I don't actually, but I know other things, and one of them is that I make a very good vegan banana cake; I'm baking one right now. I am also making a banner for tomorrow's benefit show for arrested anarchists, which features CIUDAD LINEAL, XM2, PIÑÉN and ANARQUIA VERTICAL. Barcelona is almost dead, but no more than any other place. It is almost empty of good ideas and interesting projects too, but...forget it. What I want to say is that this year, I decided to make a Top Ten, not only because the music sounds fabulous, but also because all of these bands made this shitty year better for me. They amazed me with their lyrics and what they are advocating... it's as simple as that! Come on Qwenga, let's find out what the kids have to say!

PIÑÉN – *Emancipación* EP (self-released)
Do I have to spell it out? This is the best release of the year. I have been waiting for this record for so long, and having it in my hands is a triumph. It sounds like subterranean rats riding through the most disgusting tunnels in a city that looks beautiful but hides its distorted face, slaying all that breathe this contaminated oxygen. Echoing vocals call out to remind you that PIÑÉN is a sonic abortion. They won't stop for anything. *Highest recommendation.*

G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)
Damn. They are girls living outside society's shit. We have grown up in this world full of people that tear us down, full of concepts that try to push us to the end of the well, but there's still some hope in these two worlds that separate us from "them." Us: girls living outside society's shit. We refuse to be quiet, because, as the band says, "We are from the future, not from the past / we live our own way not up history's ass." From the darkest confines of Olympia, if you haven't heard them yet, G.L.O.S.S should be your first adventure in 2016. They are raw, simple hardcore, no more and no less, practicing the craft of making noise while attempting to destroy everyday rituals of normality. "They told us to die but we chose to live."

REALIDAD – CS (Alta Intensidaz)
Last year I mentioned REALIDAD as one of the last hopes of radikal hardcore. This year, I've witnessed this trio break all the boring standards of well-played music, electrifying our blood with their ire. Oh, the ire. They have it, more than anyone. They inspire punks all around this checkered scene with the unbreakable rhythm of the D-beat that never gets old. They scream at everyone who wants to hear (or doesn't'): "Realidad, Realidad, Realidad!" "Realities of War" 2.0 for a post-industrial society afraid of listening to the truth.

FRONTE VIOLETA – *Travessias* CS (Dama da Noite)
From the other side of the world, two of my favorite people created this charm chanting. It reminds me of PORTISHEAD and CAN mixed with organic sounds reproduced from samples recorded in the moments

that these two ladies are experiencing every day. Listening to it just makes me understand the unpredictable and particular sound that is behind the great idea of destroying and recreating the punk and the DIY scene. This tape was released by the record label that I ran for the past three years and it is the first release that I didn't participate in at all. Seeing something that I was part of take a different shape is not just an exercise in adaptation, but also a beautiful way to see your friends grow up with their projects. This tape is titled *Travessias* which means "crossings." Makes sense, right?

VÉRTIGO – *Bajo la Sombra* EP (Tadpole)
Spanish punk will never sound so good after this piece-of-cake record. It reminds me of some melodic U.S. bands, but they are from Spain, so all those referençes can be erased from the blackboard. After listening to this record, their lyrics will get squashed into your mind for days. The best song on this EP is "Inoren Inon," their newest hit after "Sepultadas" from their demo tape from two years ago. I wish I could sing in Euskera and perform along with them live. Since I can't, I will save myself the embarrassment and perform a shy pogo in my room while singing with my imaginary Nagore, trying to rescue my imaginary lost Basque roots.

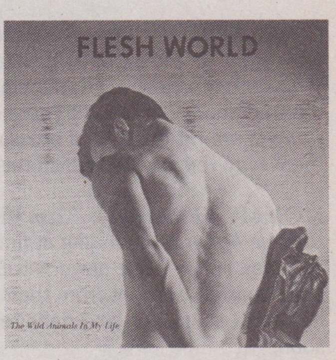
SANG – *Món Oblidat* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
In one word? Massive. It has been a long time since I've seen a very good band out of Italy, and SANG was my biggest surprise this year. When I first listened to their recordings I wondered, "Is this a new band or an old one that I don't know about?" Guess what? They got their start this very year in a forgotten city called Trento, which you might know from its mountains. They ate some lasagna (always food) with IMPACT and WRETCHED, but then went to the other side of the ocean to share a special dinner (what? food!) with LOBOTOMÍA, right now in the XXI century.

FLESH WORLD – *The Wild Animals In My Life* LP (Iron Lung)
This new LP features not only FLESH WORLD's best recordings, but also music for any occasion: to listen while you cook (I'm talking a lot about food recently), while you have friends over, while you are having sex, while you have a depressive moment, while you create something new, or while you just want to appreciate your records. They have the recipe for perfect music in their hands. Their music is like a third dimension dream, with melodic vocals, brilliant guitars, and unerring drums that never miss a beat. My favorite song is "Just to Tear Me Down," but sometimes I love "Poolside Boys" just as much. Their contagious and nostalgic sound contaminates my blood. I wish I could see them live right now, but since I can't, I'll keep my ears focused on this record, one of the best of the year without a doubt.

MÜLLTÜTE – 12" (self-released)
Two crazy German guys decided to deconstruct, reconstruct, distort, condense, condemn, redeem, and spit out hardcore that recalls classic global '80s HC but is better, because it is happening now. MÜLLTÜTE has other amazing records, but this newest record should be used as a blueprint of a great hardcore release. I wish more bands could follow their lead, but if they do they probably won't be as original as MÜLLTÜTE is, because these Germans do not follow anyone's trail, making them more special. What's happening in Berlin right now? Say it with me: MÜLLTÜTE!

FRAU – *Mira* EP (self-released)
I hated this record when I first heard it. Just hated it. But one day I felt terrible, so I put *Mira* on, and everything changed. It just fit. Everything made sense from that moment. Intense, powerful, not sensible but full of sensibility. Songs like "Mira" or "EBD" make me wonder who they want to threaten and who they want to send a message to. Maybe in the song "Who" they are just signaling that they don't care because they don't want to be anyone you want them to be. Respect.

BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
I died of anxiety once. I was born again and here I am: starring in a refused life, surrounded by people that know how to vomit shit out of their eyes, who are being consumed by their own egos. It snuffs out my passion; it corrupts my will. I want to see your face destroyed. I want you dead! Show me how uncontrollable you are, show me how much can you afford this lie. You follow their orders, you will never know. Yes, BARCELONA says this every time you watch them live. Just be strong, because they are ready for you. Nihilism never sounded so good.



PACO MUS *is the CEO of La Vida Es Un Mus, providers of primativ musik par excellence. He also plays drums in the LOWEST FORM.*

In short, 2015 was a pretty good year for punk releases. Lots of amazing demos and 7"s came out, though fewer great LPs were made. I mostly played JARFAITER's *Malianteo Criminal* mixtape and his other YouTube tracks on repeat all year, mixed with some horrid industrial, avant-garde, and techno and lots of Spanish pop. But this is a punk magazine, so I have to keep this list to punk. So here is my top eleven releases of the past year in no particular order, written on a lazy Sunday afternoon without much research. Just one disclaimer: I haven't received the new LEBENDEN TOTEN tape yet, otherwise that would be on the list. That much is certain. One love.

PIÑÉN – *Emancipación* EP (self-released)
Barcelona two-piece PIÑEN follows in the FIRMEZA 10 mold, playing basic and primitive hardcore sung in Spanish. They have a heavy anarchist message that doesn't feel preachy and a punk as fuck attitude. This entire release has a really DIY feeling, and the artwork reminds me of the old Attack Punk compilations. Silkscreened cover, staples, rubber stamps, the whole package. Overall, this is an honest and real record; it's hard to believe it came out in 2015.

PUBLIC URINATION – *I Don't* EP (American Tapes)
Genius Detroit hardcore that is equally snotty and unhinged, and that sits somewhere between PSYCHO SIN, UNITED MUTATION, and THE GRABBIES. Eight tracks of first-class sonic garbage reeking of aural joke-dom. Released by the finest Detroit label, featuring pretty disposable (yet really fitting) artwork.

FRAU – *Mira* EP (self-released)
Production values = 0 Tunes = 10. Angry disjointed hardcore punk by London's ultimate dream band.

DIÄT – *Positive Energy* LP (Adagio830 / Iron Lung)
The wait for this LP was well worth it. After a handful of singles that warned us about the songwriting power of these Berlin-based freaks, they delivered the coldest record of the year. Perfectly crafted and alienated tunes that are simply infectious. Perfect.

ISTERISMO – "Zero" flexi 7" (Hardcore Survives)
One song is all it takes for these Tokyo crusties to prove that there is no one as innovative as they are in re-interpreting hardcore. All knobs to the right, all energy to the maximum level, and a fresh approach to both noise and hardcore. More beat-y than their previous releases, this flexi shines a light onto the road that will deliver their new full length.

STRESS SS – *Fest* EP (Adult Crash)
I am a sucker for TOTALITÄR, who perfected a formula the same way the RAMONES did. When I first heard this record, I immediately felt in love with it simply because it sounds like an unreleased mid-'90s TOTALITÄR recording. It is hard to believe that this one crazy man who loves ABBA above all things and recorded everything himself got it so right for once. This is the best Scandinavian release since the last TOTALITÄR record for sure.

CRAZY SPIRIT – *Whisper* EP (Nopatience)
This is the brand new CXS release, just in time for Australian tour. *Whisper* is more cohesive sounding than their previous 7"s, but it retains the trademark CRAZY SPIRIT sound: rat-sounding vocals, broken cymbal / two-snare-hit beats, and buzzsaw guitars. Perhaps a step forward on the way to the caves to which this band seems to be heading.

MOMMY – *I Remember Them* EP (Toxic State)
D&V on Adderall. Sounding at times like a manic depressive CRASS and at times like a three-piece NEUBAUTEN, the MOMMY debut 7" is a massive improvement from their tape. They were also one of the best live acts I saw 2015, and definitely a band I hope writes a massive LP soon.

BLAZING EYE – *Ways to Die* CS (self-released)
With one foot in UK82 and the other in the ZOUO / THE SEXUAL realm, BLAZING EYE has perfected their devilish sounding hardcore. This soon-to-be-out-on vinyl cassette release is perfect proof of it. To my ears, this is the most exciting new band from the U.S.

THE DARK – *I* CS (self-released)
One of the biggest surprises of 2015 was seeing THE DARK perform. Live, this Los Angeles band has perfected the early EXECUTE style. This tape is just as great, featuring four tracks of slightly metallic early Japanese hardcore à la ADK that leave you wanting more.

EFIALTIS – CS (self-released)
Of all the current bands in London, EFIALTIS released the demo that I played the most in 2015. Militant punk sang in Greek and sounding tough as nails. Seven tracks including a mental BOBBY SOXX cover.

Honorable mentions: CULT SYNDROME CS / DESENTERRADAS CS / REALIDAD CS / SLENDER CS / TRIAGE CS / DIGITAL OCTOPUS 12" and BKB cover / JUNTA CS / PISS EP / SUBURBAN HOMES EP / PMS 84 EP

RALPH RIVERA *runs Not Normal Tapes and Records. He plays in THE BUG (yes the, one g).*

This year was different. Grace, dearest *MRR* readers, and True Believers everywhere, I apologize profusely for being unable to follow the simplest of directions. This is supposed to be a list of the most choice, most happening, most far out releases of 2015, but—not without exception—the most urgent, visceral, and impactful moments of hardcore punk manifested themselves not on slightly oblong discs (I'm looking at you, United), but on basement killing floors across Middle America, forced into fruition by those who want and need it most.

3/14 – CONEHEADS @ Everything Is Not OK, Oklahoma City, OK
If this current wave of glorified dick-and-fart jokes reveals anything of substance, it is the unfortunate truism that the further removed from any given subject of mass interest one finds oneself, the easier it is to bastardize and misappropriate its intended meaning. But even those who chanced only a fleeting glimpse of CONEHEADS in Oklahoma can confirm that they possess what the pretenders wading in their wake lack. This set was pure chaos; punks dove, dangled, flailed around in what for Oklahomans constitutes "winter," but for the rest of us was intolerable, pore-draining bullshit. MW's palpable contempt and trademark wit permeated the room this night, while his fellow MWs did the preceding and following bands a great disservice by plowing forward with unparalleled tightness.

5/22 – DOWNTOWN BOYS @ Old Mt. Happy, Chicago, IL
Raw Power. If ever a group existed that embodied that term, DOWNTOWN BOYS is the one. Raw Fucking Power. Perhaps due to Mid-Twenties Onset Dementia, I recall this night being drizzly and unseasonably cool. Even so, I paced up and down the block in anticipation of a performance I'd be waiting for since first hearing "Work." Like the propaganda arm of a larger insurgent force, DOWNTOWN BOYS commanded the audience's attention and made them feel anger, hope, a connection to something greater, and that unshakeable, unmistakable urge to shake that ass; they made them feel that Raw Fucking Power Hardcore Punk. If ever a group existed that embodied that term, that lived and breathed it, DOWNTOWN BOYS is the one.

6/9-6/13 – BUGG in and around Illinois
B-U-G-G. Two Gs, no "the," though that mistake was made a few times when seven morons split between two similarly christened punk rock 'n' roll groups got into a van with the novel idea of a hyper-regional weekend excursion. And I recall, vividly, standing around in an abandoned Chicago warehouse, surrounded by punks, chumps, true believers, nerds, drunks, wingnuts, decked out Canadian wienies, metalheads, motorheads, motormouths, and mouth breathers, the utter absurdity of it all; the surreality of existing in two points in time and space—feet straddling the line between trespassing in 2015 and attending a raucous, celluloid house-party in 1993—was both jarring and revelatory. For five full sets, as the barriers between now and then ebbed and flowed, people stood ensnared by BUGG's chrono-entanglements, their enthusiastic appreciation of '90s pop, fuzz, and comedies of a dubious nature tempered by an equal love of punk and a propensity for writing good fucking tunes. This is the weekend BUGG conquered time.

6/13 COMMON IGNORANCE @ Dumb Fest, Springfield, IL
A half-pipe and Texas skate punk. A can't-miss combination, to be sure, but that's exactly what many non-Springfieldian Dumb Fest attendees managed to do during Common Ignorance's set. Chalk it up to the incessant downpour or the fact that they were sandwiched between two

more, blech, important bands. However, these developments impacted the band's '80s, black sunglasses, punk-villain cool minimally, if at all; those who stuck around bore witness to the set of the weekend.

7/26 PANZEE @ Fed-Up Fest/Benton House, Chicago, IL
I've railed, both in these hallowed pages and elsewhere, against the scourge of nostalgia, the Adult Punk's insufferable tendency to demean, degrade, or otherwise discredit anything that doesn't fit into their myopic, banal parameters of punk. "A man of the future!" I proclaimed myself, but now I must also proclaim myself a base hypocrite. With great shame and repentance, I beseech your forgiveness, dear reader, for having misled you. I admit I stood in that humid hall and watched those Quebecois cretins PANZEE tear through ten minutes of YOUTH KORPS by way of TERVEET KÄDET insanity, the drummer bellowing frenzied laughter, the guitarist straining to shout over the ruckus, and enjoyed it thoroughly. I didn't stop there, no no no no no; I wished fervently that these manic sounds of '80s thrashcore, my true bread and butter, were the dish I was served most frequently, that I may feel sixteen again, forever.

9/11 G.L.O.S.S. / CCTV / THE BUG / COCHINA / TIGRESS @ Weenie Hut Jr.'s, Chicago, IL
Five bands convened on this somber America holy day, in commemoration of 3,000 lives lost (plus the seven times that number murdered and millions more displaced in retaliatory bloodlust). And, though our hearts hung low and heavy with emotion, sometimes you must laugh to keep from crying, so we powered through this devastating day which normally occupies only the smallest corner of the collective unconscious and is only reexamined whilst perennially making it all about ourselves or as an excuse to slaughter more brown people. Anyways, conflict of interest: I booked and played this show, but look at that fucking line-up. This had bonzer written all over it. This show stands out most starkly of all those listed for a few reasons: 1. I saw COCHINA level a room for the first of two times before their life was prematurely snuffed by a cross-continental relocation. 2. It's endlessly entertaining to see a roomful of hardened punkers shake their asses off the moment CCTV starts. 3. As every nook, cranny, crag, crevice, and armpit was populated by someone trying to snag the even the smallest bit of power from the most important band in America, I got trapped in the back, behind a furnace, during G.L.O.S.S.'s set. Even though I "missed" them, I could hear and feel every word, every riff, I could see the sense of fulfillment and excitement on every face as it left the room, which somewhat brings me to my fourth and final high point: 4. I believe this show marked a sea change from business as usual in Chicago hardcore and ushered us further towards a level many of us have fought so hard for. I felt a real sense of community that night, at a show attended, organized, and performed by mainly punks of color, women, queer, and trans folk. Though I rarely believe in assigning a hierarchy to punk nor in allowing my cynicism to falter for even a second, I'd be lying if I said this wasn't the most important show of the year.

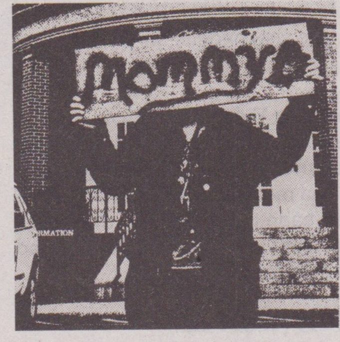
9/15 – AMERICAN HATE @ Rancho Huevos, Chicago, IL
Oklahoman dickhead convention. Art punk or whatever. The apotheosis of small town, outsider hardcore. These terms are appropriate starting points, but to fully understand the monster that is AMERICAN HATE, youda had to've been in attendance this September night. Their concept from the outset has been a running commentary on the prevailing human condition, one carried over to the live setting by their familiar three-step dance of tension, repetition, catharsis. Their humanoid minds grinded and groaned while maintaining the taut, machine precision of the first third of their set, before settling into an interminable rendition of the Rolling Stones' "Citadel." And then, with nary a pause or warning, they exploded, devolving into something more primal, primordial, visceral, with the crowd reacting in kind.

10/18 – NO APPROACH @ the Puup House, Asheville, NC
You'd be forgiven for imagining Asheville for what it mostly is: white-dread capital of Appalachia, plagued by a patchouli funk smog and peppered with fair-trade dog sweater/organic limeade stands. Lemons are too acidic and confrontational for this liberal hellscape, you fucks! Beneath this thin veneer of post-crustopia, NO APPROACH, with their perfect LA STAINS / early SST vibe, has positioned itself to bring the whole thing down. I watched in awe as this nascent punk militia tore through what I believe was only their second ever set, with an intensity and urgency of which most bands in their prime can only dream.

10/25 – DUMSPELL, THE LIMBOS, HARBOR, BIG BLEACH, BAGHEAD @ the Porn Hall, Hattiesburg, MS
Punk is anything but consistent. It grows and flowers where necessity demands, then withers and dies and propagates elsewhere. It's best discussed as a moment or as a series of moments, which, in truth, can last anywhere from a few years to only as long as the literal definition allows. The focus generally settles on these big moments in big places, but ignoring these homegrown, flash-in-the-pan periods will just leave you woefully uninformed and ultimately unsatisfied. This show was reinvigorating and served as a reminder of my deepest held beliefs: that a tight-knit scene can be held together by just a small group of true believers, a lifeline woven through all the local bands that played that night. Five names, five sets, five moments indelibly carved into my brain.

11/25 – RITALIN OD @ Rancho Huevos, Chicago, IL
Last, but not least. Just the most recent. RITALIN OD, as opposed to the surfeit of poor emulations with an inexplicable penchant for tangential mosh parts, are a troupe of young rippers that actually take cues from YDI and UNITED MUTATION who hike from their west suburban haunts (the only place that could produce bands of this quality this devoid of ego or pretense) weekly to play or attend shows in the big, shitty city. This night the city recognized and made good on that loyalty twenty-fold, as the crowd sacrificed itself on the altar of R.O.D. No amount of high energy punk r 'n' r could slake their thirst this night, so the band dug deep into their repertoire to manically, untenably, blaze through a set of no less that 15 songs in the same amount of minutes.

Other noteworthy performances and releases: CCTV EP / CHUD – live / DAGGER CS / DOWNTOWN BOYS LP / HEART ATTACK JIZZERS – live / HIRS – live / LAFFING GAS – 3rd Demo and live / MYSTIC INANE EPs / NEGATIVE SCANNER LP / SUBURBAN HOMES EP / TENEMENT LP / URANIUM CLUB LP / UROCHROMES CS / the show on 12/11 featuring BLEEDING GUMS, RITALIN OD, and BRUISED, which falls outside the scope of this already grievously ignored deadline.



SHEQUALIZING DISTORT *is a semi-regular installment of Toronto's oldest running punk radio show Equalizingxdistort, BROADcast by a women's radio collective that includes Chloe, Marjie, Sarde, and Zoe. Listen on CIUT 89.5 FM / ciut.fm, Sundays 10:00 PM-12:00 AM EST.*

Our top ten for 2015 in no particular order:

FRAU – *Mira* EP (self-released)

MOMMY – *I Remember Them* EP (Toxic State)

MYSTIC INANE – *Eggs Onna Plate* EP (Lumpy)

ZOTZ – *Víctima* EP (Discos Enfermos / Mass Media)

STRUTTER – Demo CS (self-released)

ABSOLUT / PARANOID – *Jawbreaking Mangel Devastation* split 12" (Beach Impediment / Brain Solvent Propaganda)

I.C.E. – Demo CS (self-released)

BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)

EXIT ORDER – *Take the Bait* EP (Side Two)

SHIVAUN WATCHORN *is a volunteer at Extreme Noise in Minneapolis.*

CCTV – ***Quiet* EP (Lumpy)**
CCTV is so cool. Think SUBURBAN LAWNS without the over-the-top new wave silliness, or the coolness of VKTMS revved up to hardcore speeds. "Mind Control" was mercifully rescued from an embedded Tumblr audio player and put to vinyl along with three other songs. I didn't think that they could top that song, but they did with "Paranoia," one of my favorites of the year. I hope they continue to make music and confuse people about Indiana geography, but I'm only holding my breath on the latter.

FIREWALKER – Demo CS (Failure)
Boston's FIREWALKER channel *Ball of Destruction*-era MADBALL and almost death metal vocals into a life-giving force for women and girls in pink WARZONE shirts and camo pants (and the shy girls who wanted to be that, like me). FIREWALKER gives new resonance to an old choice: dance hard or die. Given the chance to face my teen years over again, I'd dance harder. Did I mention how cool their live shows look on YouTube?

FRAU – ***Mira* EP (self-released)**
Ash from FRAU makes the tired HOAX head-bashing of a few years ago look scary and cool again. The guitarist plays shrieking feedback noise over churning, locked-in bass and drums, punctuated with Ash's hiccuping yells. The hit here is "EBD," a matter-of-fact spelling-out for us that "Communication is hard for me." (Though this record gets the point across in less than five minutes.) 2015 was a fucking dismal, desperate time. When faced with our collective immobilizing reality, one can only hope to create music as direct and vital as FRAU has on *Mira*.

KALEIDOSCOPE – ***Volume 1* CS (Interzone)**
KALEIDOSCOPE is IVY and DEFORMITY people making deconstructed bedroom sounds akin to VERTICAL SLIT *Slit and Pre-Slit*. There are some more straightforward punk songs here, with the tempo shifts I came to expect from IVY, but what I love about KALEIDOSCOPE is the introduction of new sonic elements like psychedelic shredding, soul samples, and found sounds.

LA MISMA – ***Kanizadi* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)**
I loved the LA MISMA 7", but this LP leaves it in the dust. It's propulsive, bouncy hardcore with many weirder elements intricately arranged and a vocalist spitting out her words like a bad meal. LA MISMA reminds me of PEGGIO PUNX or WRETCHED if they hadn't sounded like they were being chased by Wile E. Coyote. As much as I love those bands, I'm glad LA MISMA took the time to put one foot in front of the other.

PATSY – "Tuley Tude High / Paradise" 45 (Total Punk)
"Tuley Tude High" has an animal yelp, broken glass, a classic USHC riff (studied but not clinical), a breakneck oompa beat, and a pick slide; in other words, all the makings of a great punk song. "Paradise," even shorter and meaner, is no slouch either. I can see the singer of PATSY doing a psyche-out move where she leans in close to whisper in your ear but yells in it instead. If there's any justice in this world, the PATSY 7" will still be a ubiquitous punk house record in five years, never straying far from the turntable.

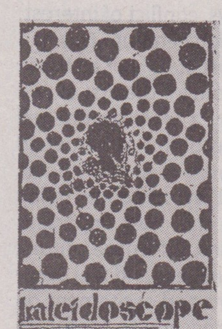
SHITFUCKS – ***Det Är Ditt Fel* 7" (Rör Du Så Dör Du Skivproduktion)**
SHITFUCKS play my absolute favorite style of music: tuneless yelling over a band of punky misfit shut-ins that would get egged at a high school battle of the bands. They're from Sweden, but other than that I know nothing about them (their 7" just showed up in my mailbox one day). The coolest racket, like THE NIXE or USCH maybe. I mean, they're called SHITFUCKS...

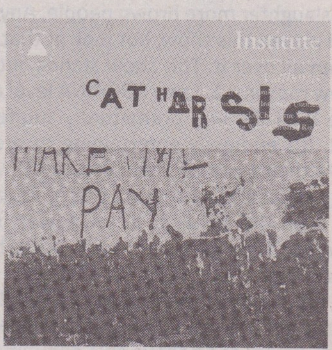
SNEAKS – ***Gymnastics* 12" (Danger)**
SNEAKS are very minimal—just vocals, bass, and drum machine. They get compared to ESG often, but they actually remind me of YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS had that band turned their amps up a bit. This is the soundtrack to walking through a tunnel in the dark, stalked by shadows. I can't recommend it enough.

TENEMENT – ***Predatory Headlights* 2xLP (Don Giovanni)**
I live in the upper Midwest, where each year at the onset of winter everyone claims they're going to do something big. I don't know what time of year this double LP was conceived and created, but it is that masterpiece that every homebound Midwesterner wishes she had made. It has hooks big enough for Budokan, moments of quiet reflection, experimentation that wouldn't occur to someone who had been outside that week, drones, minimalism. TENEMENT rescues one of my most-maligned formats, *elevates* it even, making a record roomy enough for pop crescendos and piano dirges alike.

URANIUM CLUB – ***Human Exploration* 12" (Fashionable Idiots)**
URANIUM CLUB is nuke-obsessed (and not in the DISCHARGE way). They mine (get it?) the Dangerhouse catalogue and *Hardcore*-era DEVO to forge taut and punchy post-punk. Their faux-corporate aesthetic dovetails with a larger artistic schema, obsessing over the American West. *Human Exploration* deals in all the nitty gritty: strip malls, nuclear waste, cancer, swimming pools, Sun Belt retirement communities. They're totally great, their record looks incredible, and they don't take their craft lightly. The motherlode!

Reissues that deserve your attention: BEYOND - *Dew It!/Live Crucial Chaos WNYU* LP / SUICIDE SQUAD - *I Hate School* EP / THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS – *Straight to Video* LP / AGNOSTIC FRONT – *No One Rules* LP / SCHUND – *Laut Spielen!* EP / DISCLOSE – *Tragedy LP & Yesterday's Fairytale, Tomorrow's Nightmare* LP / INDEX - *2012 Demo* EP





DANIEL, SETH, *and* JEFF *run Sorry State Records, a brick and mortar store and online distro in Raleigh, North Carolina.*

We do our best to have our collective ear to the ground for the newest and best punk and hardcore in the world, and here are the records you were most likely to hear blasting out of the speakers if you stopped by the shop this year!

INSTITUTE – ***Catharsis* LP (Sacred Bones)**
INSTITUTE started off strong, and every one of their releases has been better than the last. For a record that sounds so off-the-cuff, this one has a surprising amount of depth and stands up to many, many repeated listens.

RIXE – ***Coups Et Blessures* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)**
The only bad thing you can say about this record is that there isn't more of it! This seems to be literally as good as Oi! can possibly get in the year 2015.

VAASKA – ***Todos Contra Todos* LP (Beach Impediment)**
All of us here at Sorry State are big fans of Austin, Texas's fertile punk scene, and this blistering new LP from VAASKA represented the cream of that crop this year. Raging!

PARANOID – ***Satyagraha* LP (D-Takt & Råpunk / Konton Crasher)**
Just when you think the D-beat well has run dry, PARANOID adds a little bit of primitive metal à la CELTIC FROST and HELLHAMMER into the mix and comes up with easily the best D-beat 12"er of the year.

FRAU – *Mira* **EP (self-released)**
So much great music has been coming out of London lately that it's difficult to keep up, but FRAU is really something special. Gleefully oblivious to the boundaries that confine and limit other groups, everything they've recorded so far feels like an explosion of pure heart and energy.

MYSTIC INANE – *Ode to Joy* **EP (Negative Jazz) and** *Eggs Onna Plate* **EP (Lumpy)**
The word that I think best describes MYSTIC INANE's output this year is "impeccable." No other band seems so sensitive to what makes early US punk and hardcore great while still determined to elaborate and expand upon it.

CCTV – *Quiet* **EP (Lumpy)**
The CONEHEADS LP or any of the great cassettes that came from this scene / group of people could have gone here just as easily, but CCTV is our pick. We really, really want to hear a lot more music from this band.

LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* **LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)**
The New York scene continues to explode with creativity and the Toxic State logo on the back of a screen-printed jacket continues to be an impeccable mark of quality. In a great year for that label, LA MISMA's LP was our favorite release.

DIÄT – *Positive Energy* **LP (Adagio830 / Iron Lung)**
All of the hooks and songwriting chops of their buds in TOTAL CONTROL, but with a more traditionally punk / post-punk aesthetic.

HALDOL – 12" (Grim Winds / World Gone Mad)
Probably the most-played LP in the store this year. With the perfect combination of post-punk melody and driving hardcore energy, why isn't HALDOL the most-hyped band in punk right now?

Daniel's bonus pick: KALEIDOSCOPE – *Volume 1* CS (Interzone)
Jeff's bonus pick: STRESS SS – *Fest* EP (Adult Crash)
Seth's bonus pick: BLANK SPELL – *Malign Eye* 7" (Cruel Noise / Trabuc / World Gone Mad)

TESSA TRIBE *runs the Lost in Fog label and distro in Australia.*

G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* **EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)**
I don't think I need to say much as to why G.L.O.S.S. are one of the most amazing and important bands around at the moment, but that aside, goddamn these tracks are bloody bangin' spot on hardcore.

LAST CHAOS – *Only Fit For Ghosts* **12" (SPHC)**
Best AUS release of this year for sure, delivering the ripping catchy D-beat I know LAST CHAOS for but changing it up a bit with a few punchy slow bangers like the track "Lizard Law," which I think is about Illuminati Lizard People? Well, I hope it is! Rest of the world, get onto this LP cause it's bulldog.

LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* **LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)**
I have been waiting excitedly for the LP for some time. LA MISMA have been the standout of mine from the large amount of gold NYC punk has been producing for the last few years. The CRISIS-style riff on the first track "Kanizadi" totally sucked me in and the rest of the album had me totally captivated.

SCAB EATER – *Constant Future* **EP (Blow Blood / Hardcore Victim)**
These guys can do no wrong in my book. Well-executed pummelling hardcore from this Melbourne/Boston four-piece. The real reason I love this 7" is that it has that same weird chorus-drenched hardcore guitar sound that really caught me on their demo.

PRISON – "Wrony/Kundle" 45 (Rusted Teeth / Saudade)
Very rarely do I find bands that manage to really evoke emotion within the listener. The vocalist in Prison is singing in Polish but her voice is so ethereal yet powerful that it feels like she's singing directly to you. This 7" is bittersweet in the best way. I can't wait for their LP.

RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* **EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)**
It's been awhile since I've heard a contemporary Oi! band that I really, really love. RIXE tick all the boxes for the perfect Oi! record in my book—catchy and chanty without being generic and with anti-facist politically minded lyrics (I think? My French is *not* good). I haven't heard anything I've really loved from France in a long time, by this 7" is a classic for sure.

CEMETERY – *Wind and Shadows* **LP (Inflammable Material / Mass Media)**
Another release I'd been eagerly awaiting since their 2011 demo. It was a long wait, but worth it. The singer's vocals seemed to have really progressed heaps since the demo. I know this band all live in different cities in the US and you can kind of tell, as the tracks are all slightly different, like they've been recorded over a long period of time. Instead of making the album disjointed I think it makes a perfect eclectic mix of goth and post-punk.

DAILY RITUAL – LP (4490 / Sabotage)
This LP delivers the catchy solid post-punk that I'd come to expect from their 7" but what was really interesting was the insight the lyrics gave into the history and reality of living in a police state like Singapore, but from within a thriving punk scene. The track "You Represent Decay" is the perfect culmination of the LP, fast and angry, a depressive call out to the rest of the world.

RED RED KROVVY – *Global Citizen* **EP (Helta Skelta)**
I almost hate this 7" because I had the first track "New Year" stuck in my head for literally a month. Super fun pissy garage-y/pogo punk from this Melbourne/Sydney three-piece.

V/A – *Girls Radio Offensive* **CS (self-released)**
Put together by a rad group of gals who run a radical radio show in Melbourne, this comp features some of Australia's best current bands with at least one femme member. A really great cross-section across genres and states from the radical DIY AUS music scene.

Honorable Mentions: WIZZ KIDS – *Humiliations* EP / VANILLA POPPERS – Demo CS / LYSOL – Demo CS

ABORTICIDIO / LICKER – *Tex-Mex Nuclear Noise Pop Punkers* split flexi EP (Torture Garden Picture Company)
ABSOLUT / PARANOID – *Jawbreaking Mangel Devastation* split 12" (Beach Impediment / Brain Solvent Propaganda)
AJAX – *Priced* EP (Beach Impediment / Static Shock)
AKKA – *Four Beliefs* EP (Insane Punk)
ALIENATION – *2015 Mini-LP* 12" (Warthog Speak)
ANDY HUMAN & THE REPTOIDS – LP (S-S)
ANGER FLARES – *Keeps On Burning* LP (Randale)
AQUARIAN BLOOD – *Savage Mind* EP (Goner)
ATRAMENT – *Demo MMXV* CS (Sentient Ruin Laboratories)
AUSENCIA – *Sombra de Exilio* EP (Discos MMM / Verdugo)
AYE NAKO – *The Blackest Eye* 12" (Don Giovanni)
B SQUADRON – *Saturday's Soldiers* EP (Rebellion)
BADLANDS – "Dark/Dreams" 45 (Porchcore)
BARCELONA – *Extremo Nihilismo en Barcelona* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
BENNY AND THE ROIDS – Demo CS (self-released)
BIB – Demo CS (self-released)
BIKINI KILL – *Revolution Girl Style Now* LP (Bikini Kill)
BIRDS IN ROW – *Personal War* 12" EP (Deathwish Inc.)
BLACK ABBA – "Betting On Death/Civilized" 45 (Goner)
BLACK TIME – *Aerial Gobs Of Death* LP (Förbjudna Ljud)
BLANK SPELL – *Malign Eye* 7" (Cruel Noise / Trabuc / World Gone Mad)
BLAZING EYE – *Ways to Die* CS (self-released)
BLOBS – CS (More Power)
BROKEN TALENT – *Rules No One* LP (Floridas Dead)
THE BUG – *What's Buggin' You?* CS (Not Normal)
BUTCHER – *Holding Back the Night* LP (Butcher)
C – *Dear Fuckin' Shit All Fascists + 2* LP (Hardcore Survives)
DISORDER / STAGNATION – *UK vs. Japan Noize Core Wars* split EP (Strong Mind Japan)
DISSEKERAD – *Mörket Tilltar* LP (Phobia)
DON HOWLAND – *Life Is a Nightmare* LP (12XU)
DOWNTOWN BOYS – *Full Communism* LP (Don Giovanni)
DYKE DRAMA – *Tender Resignation* 12" (Salinas)
EEL – *Fuck Off, the Human Insect* EP (Beach Impediment)
EFIALTIS – CS (self-released)
ERA OF FEAR / ΠΑΝΔΗΜΙΑ – split LP (Dark Liquid / Eye5 / Scarecrow)
EXIT ORDER – *Take the Bait* EP (Side Two)
FATIGUE – *Dog Bodies* EP (Warthog Speak)
FERALS – Demo CS (self-released)
FIREWALKER – Demo CS (Failure)
FIT FOR ABUSE – *Mindless Violence* 12" (Armageddon)
FLEABITE – *TTYL* EP (Puzzle Pieces)
FLESH WORLD – *The Wild Animals In My Life* LP (Iron Lung)
FORCED ORDER – *Vanished Crusade* LP (Revelation)
FRAU – *Mira* EP (self-released)
FRENZY – Disconnected EP (Hardcore Survives)
FRONTE VIOLETA – *Travessias* CS (Dama da Noite)
FUCK $$ – Demo CS (World Gone Mad)
FUCKING – *Atomic Orgasm* EP (self-released)
FUNDAMENTAL / MUTANT ITCH / STUPID LIFE – *Stupid Mental Itch* CS (Dark Raids)
FZ-10 – *Kaötika Existencia* EP (Rock SVB)
G.I.S.M. – *Determination* CD (Beast Arts)
G.L.O.S.S. – *Girls Living Outside Society's Shit* EP (Nervous Nelly / Total Negativity)
GIMP FIST – *The Last Stand* LP (Sunny Bastards)
GOLDMAN SEX BATALION – *Goldman's Beat* CS (Records Inc.)

ALL OF OUR FAVORITE 2015

CADAVER EM TRANSE – *Camaleão* EP (Iron Lung)
CCTV – *Quiet* EP (Lumpy)
CEMETERY – *Wind and Shadows* LP (Inflammable Material / Mass Media)
CHAIN RANK – *Up Against the Wall* LP (self-released)
CHAOS TRIBE – Demo CS (self-released)
CHILDBIRTH – *Women's Rights* LP (Suicide Squeeze)
CHROME REVERSE – *Yeah, Yeah, We Are...* EP (Mag Wheels)
CIUDAD LINEAL – *El Nuevo Hombre* LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
CLOUD RAT – *Qliphoth* LP (Halo of Flies / IFB / Moment of Collapse)
COLD BEAT – *Into the Air* LP (Crime on the Moon)
CONCEALED BLADE – *Demo 2105* EP (Beach Impediment / Hardware)
CONDITIØN – *Actual Hell* 12" (Iron Lung)
CONEHEADS – *L.P.1 Aka 14 Year Old High School PC-Fascist Hype Lords Rip Off Devo For The Sake Of Extorting $$$ From Helpless Impressionable Midwestern Internet Peoplepunks* LP (Erste Theke Tonträger / International Players Club)
CONSTANT INSULT – 12" (Let's Pretend)
CONSTANT MONGREL – *DCM* EP (R.I.P. Society)
CRAZY SPIRIT – *Whisper* EP (Nopatience)
CROWN COURT – *Ruck And Roll* EP (American Oi! / Longshot / Rebellion)
CROWN COURT – *The English Disease* EP (Rebellion)
CUNTZ – *Force the Zone* LP (Homeless)
DAILY RITUAL – LP (4490 / Sabotage)
DAKHMA – *Raze* CS (self-released)
THE DARK – *I* CS (self-released)
THE DARK – *II* CS (self-released)
DAWN OF HUMANS – *Slurping at the Cosmos Spine* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
DEAD HERO / SECTA – split LP (Discos MMM / Discos Rat Trap)
DESPAIR – Demo CS (self-released)
DIÄT – *Positive Energy* LP (Adagio830 / Iron Lung)
DIE! DIE! DIE! – *What Did You Expect* CD (self-released)
DISCLOSE – *Tragedy* LP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
HAIR LONG AND FREEKY – *V.1* CS (self-released)
HALDOL – 12" (Grim Winds / World Gone Mad)
HARD SKIN – *Do You Like Hospital Food* LP (JT Classics)
HIEROPHANTS – *Parallax Error* LP (Aarght! / Goner)
HOME BLITZ – *Foremost + Fair* LP (Richie)
HORRENDOUS – *War Is Still...* 12" (Brain Solvent Propaganda)
I.C.E. – Demo CS (self-released)
INSTITUTE – *Catharsis* LP (Sacred Bones)
ISTERISMO – "Zero" flexi 7" (Hardcore Survives)
IVY – *A Cat's Cause, No Dogs Problem* EP (Katorga Works)
JAMIE AND THE DEBT – *No, Life Isn't* CS (self-released)
JJ DOLL – Demo CS (self-released)
JOHNNY MOPED – "Ain't No Rock N Roll Rookie/Super Woofa" (Damaged Goods)
JUNGBLUTH – *Lovecult* LP (self-released)
KALEIDOSCOPE – *Volume 1* CS (Interzone)
KOHTI TUHOA – *Rutiiniu Orja* 12" (Svart)
KORROSIVE – *The Kaaos B-Sides* flexi 7" (Nightrider / Shithammer)
KORSFÄST – *Ingen Ro För En Sliten Själ* 12" (D-Takt & Råpunk)
KRÖMOSOM / NOMAD – split EP (Lengua Armada)
L.O.T.I.O.N. – *Digital Control and Man's Obsolescence* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
LAPINPOLTHAJAT – *III* LP (Grind Your Mind / Havoc / Höhnie / Kämäset Leyvt / Papagájův Hlastel / Roku)
LAST CHAOS – *Only Fit For Ghosts* 12" (SPHC)
LAST CRUSADE – LP (Longshot / Rebellion)
LEBENDEN TOTEN – *Stagnation Fragmentation* CS (Whispers in Darkness)
LIFE CHAIN – *No More Bloom* flexi EP (Dark Raids / Imminent Destruction)
LIME CRUSH – *Graveyard* EP (Fettkakao)
LITOVSK / SYNDROME 81 – split EP (Backwash/Destructure/ Emergence)
LONG GONE – *Demo MMXIV* CS (Bezerker)
LONGINGS – 12" (Framework)
MANIAC – *Demimonde* LP (La-Ti-Da)

MARY BELL – *Vultures* EP (Danger)
MERCENÁRIAS – *Demo 1983* EP (Dama Da Noite / Nada Nada)
MIDNITE SNAXXX – "Don't Wake Me Up/Pull Down the Shades" 45 (Total Punk)
LA MISMA – *Kanizadi* LP (Toxic State / La Vida Es Un Mus)
MOMMY – Demo CS (Electric Assault)
MOMMY – *I Remember Them* EP (Toxic State)
MÖRKHIMMEL – *Ostří Černé Kosy Zní* LP (Insane Society)
MOZART – *The Tick* CS (self-released)
MUERTE – LP (Cabeza de Vaca / Cintas Pepe / SPHC)
MUFF DIVERS – *No Muff Too Tuff* EP (Lumpy)
MÜLLTÜTE – 12" (self-released)
MYSTIC INANE – *Eggs Onna Plate* EP (Lumpy)
MYSTIC INANE – *Ode to Joy* EP (Negative Jazz)
NATURE BOYS – "Pissy Wind/Coast to Coast" 45 (Replay)
NERVOSAS – LP (Dirtnap)
NO – *Treating People Like They Don't Exist* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
NO FORM – 12" (Muscle Horse / Reagant)
NO TOLERANCE – *You Walk Alone* LP (Painkiller / QCHQ)
NOTS – "Virgin Mary/Shelf Life" 45 (Goner)
OBNOX – *Know America* LP (Ever/Never)
ODD MAN OUT – *Sold Out* EP (Warthog Speak)
OFFENSIVE WEAPON – *The Nightmare Returns* LP (Hostile Class Productions)
THE OINTMENT – Demo CS (self-released)
ÖNKIÍRTÁS – Demo CS (Pizza Days)
ORDEN MUNDIAL – *El Nuevo Sonido Balear* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
ÖTZI – Demo CS (self-released)
OUTREAU – *Double Hate* EP (Une Vie Pour Rien?)
PARANOID – *Satyagraha* LP (D-Takt & Råpunk / Konton Crasher)
SACRED PAWS – *Six Songs* 12" (Rock Action)
SANG – *Món Oblidat* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
SBSM – *Joy / Rage* CS (Remote Outposts)
SCAB EATER – Constant Future EP (Blow Blood / Hardcore Victim)
SEI TO SHI – 生と死 EP (Nightrider)
SEXFACE – *Village Life* EP (Distort Reality)
SHEER MAG – *II* 7" (Katorga Works / Static Shock / Wilsuns Recording Company)
SHITFUCKS – *Det Är Ditt Fel* 7" (Rör Du Så Dör Du Skivproduktion)
SHOPPING – *Why Choose* LP (FatCat)
SLUGGA – "Parasite/Shaved Heads" 45 (Total Punk)
SNEAKS – CS (Sister Polygon)
SNEAKS – *Gymnastics* 12" (Danger)
SNOB – *Quit Your Job* EP (self-released)
SOBERANÍA PERSONAL – *Benditos Sean Muñecos Que Pegan* LP (Metadona)
SOW THREAT – *Decontrol* EP (Imminent Destruction)
STAND UP – Demo CS (self-released)
STARING PROBLEM – *Long Winter* CS (self-released)
STEFAN CHRISTENSEN – *Israel (It's More of the Same)* CS (self-released)
STRASBOURG – *Fruit de la Passion* LP (Le Turc Mecanique)
STRESS SS – *Fest* EP (Adult Crash)
STRUTTER – Demo CS (self-released)
SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK/Television Spies" 45 (Total Punk)
SUBURBAN HOMES – *The Suburban Home* EP (Market Square)
SUN BATHER – "ZZZZ/Roden Til Alt Ondt" 45 (Hjernespind)
SVALBARD – *One Day All This Will End* LP (Holy Roar)

RELEASES IN ONE PLACE

PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise" 45 (Total Punk)
PERSPEX FLESH – *Ordered Image* 12" (Static Shock)
PIG DNA – *Mob Shity* 12" (La Vida Es Un Mus)
PIÑÉN – *Emancipación* EP (self-released)
PISS – *Pubertala Upprор* EP (Static Age)
PLASTIX – *Ich Bin Modern* LP (Danger)
PMS 84 – *Creep* EP (Nightrider)
THE POISON COLA – *Flame of Rising Fist* EP (Not Very Nice)
POWER – *Electric Glitter Boogie* LP (Cool Death)
PRISON – "Wrony/Kundle" 45 (Rusted Teeth / Saudade)
PROTESTER – *No Identity* EP (Triple B)
PUBLIC URINATION – *I Don't* EP (American Tapes)
PURE DISGUST – *Chained* EP (Katorga Works / QCHC)
PUTREFACTION – *Scavenger* EP (Distro-y)
Q – *Recqrd* EP (Lumpy)
RADIOACTIVITY – *Silent Kill* LP (Dirtnap)
RAGANA – *Wash Away* LP (An Out)
RATS REST – *4 Songs* CS (Stay Punk)
RATS REST – *Permanent Catastrophe* EP (Erste Theke Tonträger)
RATS REST – "Hedonite/Out of the Darkness, Into the Night" 45 (Starcleaner)
RAW PONY – "Bo Diddley/Shattered" 45 (Heel Turn)
RAZORCUT – *Rise Again* LP (Longshot / Rebellion)
REALIDAD – CS (Alta Intensidaz)
RECONQUESTA – *Recupera El Que Et Pertany* LP (Disco Nightmare / See You)
RECONSIDERATION – *Noise Addicts* EP (Pogo 77)
RED RED KROVVY – *Global Citizen* EP (Helta Skelta)
RICHARD PAPIERCUTS – *If* LP (Ever/Never)
RIK AND THE PIGS – "Pig Sweat/Feed the Animal (Ode to Ted)" 45 (Total Punk)
RITUAL CONTROL – *Inoculation* EP (Sabotage)
RIXE – *Coups Et Blessures* EP (La Vida Es Un Mus)
ROYAL HEADACHE – *High* LP (Distant & Vague / What's Your Rupture)
S.A.G.A.L. – *Suckup Abolics Gain Acrobatic Licks* CS (Pissed Off)
S.H.I. – 死 CD (Black Lodge / Crust War)
SWIFTUMZ – *Everybody Loves Chris* LP (Melters)
SYMPTOM – *Demo + EP* CS (self-released)
SYNDICATE – Demo CS (self-released)
TAMPAX – "Suck My Cock/Snivell" 45 (Rave Up)
TENEMENT – *Predatory Headlights* 2xLP (Don Giovanni)
TERRY – *Talk About Terry* EP (Upset the Rhythm)
TETSU AREI – *IV* CD (Break the Records)
TOP DOG – *Welcome to My World* EP (Rebellion)
TOZCOS – *Existencia Aturdida* EP (Verdugo)
TRTRKMMR – *Avec La Souillure Nous Entrons Au Règne De La Terreur* LP (Iron Lung)
TV SLIME – *Flying Fuck* EP (self-released)
URANIUM CLUB – *Human Exploration* 12" (Fashionable Idiots)
UROCHROMES – *Get In Line 4 Mental Decline* CS (Gut Freak)
USA NAILS – *No Pleasure* CD (Bigoût / Smalltown America)
VAASKA – *Todos Contra Todos* LP (Beach Impediment)
VANITY – "Yer Fucking Boring/There's the Door" 45 (Katorga Works)
VASTUSTA – Demo CS (self-released)
VATICAN DAGGER – "Not To Be/The Mess" 45 (Total Punk)
VEIL – Demo CS (self-released)
VÉRTIGO – *Bajo la Sombra* EP (Tadpole)
VEXX – *Give and Take* EP (Katorga Works)
VIAL – *You're Not Safe* EP (Cut-Rate)
VIOLENCE CREEPS – "I'm Broke/Gridlock" flexi 7" (Degenerate)
VIOLENCE CREEPS – *On My Turf* EP (VeeCee)
THE WARDEN – *Cell Bars* EP (Lumpy)
THE WAVE PICTURES – "I Could Hear The Telephone (3 Floors Above Me)/Walking on the Water" 45 (Moshi Moshi)
WILD CHILD – *2015 Tour Tape* CS (self-released)
ZONE INFINIE – *Les Failles* LP (Maloka / Senseless Acts of Anger / Bisounours Prod)
ZOTZ – *Víctima* EP (Discos Enfermos / Mass Media)
V/A – *Girls Radio Offensive* CS (self-released)
V/A – *La Force dans la Oi! Vol. 2* EP (Une Vie Pour Rien Vinyles)
V/A – *Ohio's Greatest Obscenities* CS (Cretun)
V/A – *Scrap!* CD (Mangrove)

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MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

It is that time of the year when I, the President of the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™, release our list of best films of 2015. Making these best of lists is a bunch of bullshit, but who am I to deny anyone including myself this pointless annual ritual.

Here are the Punk Rock Film Critics Association™ best films of 2015.

The Dicks From Texas gets all the band documentary things right. This is a film for people who are interested in the band. It does not bother to attempt to explain the origins of punk to the average person. Plus it is a very punk film. The filmmaking is DIY and lo-fi. The Dicks started as an idea before they were a band and singer Gary Floyd was somewhat of an Austin celebrity who became a legend. David Yow sums it up best, "it never occurred to me before seeing The Dicks that being afraid of the band could be a cool idea." That in itself is the stuff of infamy. (thedicksfromtexas.com)

What Happened Miss Simone? is the inspirational, heartbreaking and redemptive story of Nina Simone. Simone was child piano prodigy Eunice Waymon who due to racism was not accepted to study at the Curtis Institute. As a result she took up a job playing piano in Atlantic City. Her boss forced her to sing and Nina Simone was born. **What Happened Miss Simone?** follows Simone through her early popularity, her involvement with the Civil Rights movement, her move to Liberia and her return to performing. As Simone says, "How can you be an artist and not reflect the times?" Simone truly reflects her times and as such remains an inspiration. (netflix.com)

Basically, Johnny Moped: Johnny Moped starts off like most legendary bands. They were childhood friends who formed a band. They played shows in their hometown of Croydon, UK where the other more "professional" bands were not amused by some kids having a laugh. Of course, this attitude translated well when a few years later punk broke in London. Although Johnny Moped played with all the biggies they never made it per se. Yet, they released one of the best singles of 2015. No other legendary punk band can say that. (basicallyjohnnymoped.com)

Ned Rifle is the third film in a trilogy of films that didn't intend to be a trilogy. As such it is surprising that **Ned Rifle** is a satisfying end to the series that started out with **Henry Fool** and **Fay Grim**. Ned is the son of Henry and Fay. The film starts out with Ned turning eighteen. He is allowed to leave the sort of witness protection program where he has been living with a minister and his family. He declares he is going to find and kill his father. **Ned Rifle** plays like a thriller, but without all the over the top Hollywood drama we are used to seeing. As such it plausible while also being entertaining. (halhartley.com)

Don't Think I've Forgotten: Cambodia's Lost Rock and Roll is the story of the vibrant music scene in Cambodia prior to the Khmer Rouge's takeover of the country. The story is heartbreaking. The first half is filled with such amazing sounds. The Cambodian musicians were influenced by French, Cuban and South American music. Then as the '60s advanced, American and English rock started to creep in, creating an usual hybrid. The second half is filled with inexplicable horror as singers and musicians are murdered by the government to rid the country of Western influence. Their records were forbidden and destroyed. Some have survived and the story is finally being told. (dtifcambodia.com)

Korla is the story of Korla Pandit a musician, composer and early television pioneer. Pandit started in the '40s as an organ player on Los Angeles radio. He found fame when he began playing on television. He had his own show where he simply played organ and piano while gazing dreamily into the camera. Viewers were fascinated by his music as well as his persona. He was from New Delhi, India and wore a turban with a jewel in the center. **Korla** delves into Pandit's history, uncovering some surprising beginnings. (korlathemovie.com)

Lee Scratch Perry's Vision Of Paradise: Lee Scratch Perry is such a character, he can't help but be interesting. He speaks in dub, a musical style he helped developed, repeating everything three times with slight variations. He is a music innovator who still seems to have the touch. Getting to watch him work in this film is what makes it so fascinating. The film follows Perry around for fifteen years after he relocated from Jamaica to Switzerland. We see him on stage, in the studio and on the street. (visionofparadise.de)

Love And Mercy: I am as surprised as anyone that a biopic of Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys fascinates me. **Love And Mercy** focuses on two specific periods of Wilson's life. Each is played by a different actor. It's such an odd concept. The history of how Wilson ended up where he was during each is not explained. The periphery characters are not introduced. The viewer is forced to fill in the details. On the first viewing I couldn't stop wondering why. On the second I simply enjoyed the story. (loveandmercyfilm.com)

The Damned Don't You Wish We Were Dead: I considered not including **The Damned Don't You Wish We Were Dead** due to the fact that we hear "New Rose" in the film more times than would ever be necessary. However the story of the Damned is a good one. All four original band members are interviewed for this film and the gloves come off. Do you know why they will never reform? Now you do. (damneddoc.com)

What We Do In The Shadows: The goofy idea of four vampires from different centuries sharing a house in New Zealand seems dumb enough to work. It does. Who would suspect vampires worry about keeping a clean house or have to deal with obnoxious doormen who won't invite them into bars so they can find victims? While there are some bigger problems in the vampires' lives, it is the everyday mundanities that amuse. The subtle humor and ridiculousness of it all keep **What We Do In The Shadows** enjoyable to the end. (whatwedointheshadows.com)

Honorable mentions: **Fassbinder: To Love Without Demands, Sex and Broadcasting, Jobriath A.D., T-Rex** and **Salad Days.**

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, Maximum Rocknroll, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it.

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(AU) Andrew Underwood
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(CK) Carolyn Keddy
(CR) Camylle Reynolds
(CS) Chris Hubbard
(DG) Dan Goetz
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(RL) Ray Lujan
(RW) Ryan Wells
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(WB) Will Blomquist
(WN) Robert Collins

A NEW SCAR / WARFARE – split EP
Here's a good look at some contemporary, radical (in the political sense) Italian hardcore. A NEW SCAR has a full, bass-heavy sound. They're a little heavier than classic Italian HC, but otherwise are close, with rad, pissed yelling and catchy enough, driving songs. This shit is right on. WARFARE isn't far off this style. They are slightly more diverse, with multiple vocalists, a few lead guitar parts and some tempo changes. They aren't quite as strong as the flip, but still a decent showing. Both bands' lyrics are in Italian. (JM)
(Grezzi / Rotten' Roll / ZAS-Autoproduzioni)

ACTIVE MINDS / THISCLOSE – split EP
I really like the split EP format, but bands don't always devote their best material. You can't fault ACTIVE MINDS for this, as their songs are pretty consistent across the decades. They open this one with their trademark simple, fast and raw style, accentuated by the big "woah-oh-oh" on the chorus. There's a short double-time number and a more D-beat tune to close it out. I do prefer this band in smaller doses, and the first song here is fine. THISCLOSE may have used their better songs on their LP, which also came in this month. They give us a cover song (guess who) and a track redone from an earlier EP. "Leaders, Deceivers" is sped-up, but I wouldn't say improved. I really dug their earlier releases, but this EP isn't essential. (JM)
(SPHC)

ADVERSARY – CD
This is a UK melodic hardcore band from around 1990. Although they were supposed to do a full-length for Meantime Records at the time, this is their first release, a comp of two demos. It's a mix of songs with delay on the guitar and hardcore with that same effect; sometimes there are elements of the DAMNED and others it is FUGAZI, MINUTEMEN or even UK82. So they were fans of various elements of punk. This is good, though I would have liked to have an album that was a little more cohesive musically. Probably best for UK'ers who saw them at the time. (RL)
(Boss Tuneage)

AGENT ATTITUDE – "Deranged Realities" LP
The band's name kinda gives away the style these kids are appropriatin'. Uppsala, Sweden's AGENT ATTITUDE takes the bouncy, early hardcore stylings of Southern California and punches it up a bit for today's slammers. The record is well produced, but the songs are pretty bland. None stand out, and an entire LP seems excessive. This is one of those records people buy at the show and a year or two later there's a lot of used ones around. (JM)
(Man In Decline)

ALIENATION – "2015 Mini-LP" 12"
This band competently draws from all over the early '80s US hardcore canon, with drumming that matches everything stylistically well enough that their (DC) YOUTH BRIDGADE cover does not sound out of place. Sonically and in terms of attitude (and to some extent, the vocals), it makes me think of if the NIHILISTICS LP were recorded in a far more atmospheric manner. But rather than going for a retro sound, they opt for inventive, dissonant songs that often shapeshift but never sound forced, and are great at all speeds, whether proto-blasting, standard fast, or dirging. That said, it does sound more like a collection of songs than a cohesive album, and despite the worst track on here still being "good," part of me wishes they had gone for a mind-blowing 7" instead. But this is still far better than average as it is. (DG)
(Warthog Speak)

ALTAR OF COMPLAINTS / SEEK / STUBBORN FATHER / THETAN – split LP
Two bands from Osaka and two more from Nashville team up on this international screamo sampler, worthwhile for genre heads but unexceptional for the most part. ALTAR OF COMPLAINTS has a spacey, noodle-driven sound, and the reverb-soaked leads and meandering songwriting yearn for the '90s heyday of nostalgic guitar rock. SEEK wave the ENVY flag proudly on their single long-form track, with sparse, forlorn heaviness winding down to jazzy, clean instrumentals and back again across eight-and-a-half minutes. STUBBORN FATHER has more of a grinding edge to their songs, but wanky guitar shreds link this to the other bands on this split, and I probably liked their songs the best of the four. THETAN rounds things out with a style that's more akin to metallic hardcore and lo-fi noise-rock than screamo proper—quick, high-impact bursts and jerky stop-start transitions being the order of the day. When they finally stretch out on the closing track, the results are quite satisfying. (WB)
(Kakusan / Long Legs Long Arms / Meatcube)

ANGELIC UPSTARTS – "Bullingdon Bastards" CD
I'm very big on these UK legends. Although only Mensi is left from the early days, these guys know how to do the '80s UK punk thing. Still flying the flag (and a red one at that), the band is top-notch on this release. Some real rockers on this as well as some tuneful slower songs. This is their first studio album in thirteen years and it could have easily been recorded in 1984, sound-wise. Also included with the CD format is a bonus disc of *The Dirty Half Dozen*, a split LP they did a few years ago. I really wish these guys would finally make it back to the Bay Area for a show or two. A triumphant studio return! (RL)
(Boss Tuneage)

ANOTHER SOCIAL DISEASE – "Coward/ Bastard"

What makes this record stand out is the incessant repetition of "coward pussy fucks" on the A-side until you really have no grasp of what those words mean independent of one another. I'm hearing a lot of Gertrude Stein's early work in this song. Musically, this record reminds me of *Cause For Alarm*-era AGNOSTIC FRONT and I found myself wishing that Pete Steele wrote these lyrics as well (if you're gonna try and push the boundaries, at least take some cues from a guy who was in CARNIVORE). To be honest, I read the lyrics first and was put off, but the crossover vibe made this record listenable. For fans of: the New York Giants; fuck the Eagles, also fuck the Pats. (MW)
(Social Disease)

ANTIBODIES – "Happy New Year Zero" CD

ANTIBODIES sound like an average English Oi! band, which is kind of funny since the cover for this CD doesn't give any indication of that. Well, maybe that bikini-clad woman shaking an atom bomb on the back. A few songs of this sound OK. Yet, around song seven it gets to be too much of the same. Maybe go for an EP next time. (CK)
(BinsTwins)

ANTLERED AUNT LORD – "Ostensibly Formerly Stunted (And On Fire)" LP

ANTLERED AUNT LORD play charming indie pop. It is quirky and breezy, reminding me of early NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL. Athens, GA, musician Jesse Standard is the force behind this LP. According to the liner notes, he apparently "tricked" his friends into being recorded for it. It has that bedroom recording quality: lo-fi and sincere. It is interesting stuff. (CK)
(HHBTM)

ATLANTIC THRILLS – "Vices" LP

Good time basement party music from an East Coast garage (I'm guessing...) ATLANTIC THRILLS have an organ-driven take on that reverb-soaked "new Oldies" sound (although not as lo-fi as, say, SHANNON AND THE CLAMS) with flourishes of glam rock swagger. The songwriting is tight and the production is top-notch. These guys would definitely get Potsie and Ralph Malph moshing at the hop at Al's Drive In after homecoming but for some reason this record isn't doing much for me. (AM)
(Almost Ready)

BADABOUM – LP

Witch punk or a molasses CHRISTIAN DEATH or a droned out MALARIA or maybe like if PALBERTA was playing BAUHAUS? It's way spookier and goofier than anything of that ilk that's happening as of late. The songs have extended instrumental jams that get really freaky but are also repetitive and restrained and then at some point burst into something that seems closer to a song. Freaks who don't realize they are freaks maybe? This is real weird. (MM)
(Bruit Direct Disques)

BASEMENT BENDERS – "Lydiad" LP

If you've spent much time in the South *and* like region rock, chances are you know each member of this band by their first name. They have all been in lots of bands, toured endlessly and put out many great records—and this is another one to add to the already extensive list. The easiest comparison to make would be FUTURE VIRGINS, which is guitarist Ashley's most recent other band. He has a distinct style of songwriting that carries over from project to project. While there is certainly a lot of bleed-over here, it's also clear the other members left their fingerprints on the songs in distinct ways. There's country twang that bubbles up to the surface on many of the slower numbers. (They do live in the South and are over 30, so maybe they can't help it.) There's something in this album that feels *adult*. Not in a bad way at all; just an older, wiser, deeper approach to songwriting, and a lyrical perspective that certainly comes from people who have a decade (or decades) separating present-day from a time when they wrote songs about being wasted. So while it's catchy enough to make the mohawked seventeen-year-olds bounce off the walls, it's also something you jaded workaholics with back problems will like. It really is a kick ass album that can basically be summed up in two words: "Hell Yeah!" (FS)
(No Idea)

BELLS OF.. – "00/85" LP

It's crazy how stuff gets lost and found—mostly found these days. What other cool bands the '80s have demos that I know nothing about? Probably a lot. Here is a record that at least a couple people felt so strongly about that it has been released 30 years after it was recorded. It sounds very much like RITES OF SPRING, maybe a little more new wavey but not too far off. It doesn't sound fake or ripped off, but part of its time and deserving of its place among all those Revolution Summer bands that everyone already knows. The record comes with a small booklet that has the story of the band's early years, told by some of the more well-known former members like Jason Ferrell (he wasn't on this record) and Alec MacKaye (well, not really on this record either) but this stuff isn't really about them. It's about a moment in history and a pretty good record that holds up alongside others that were released at the time. (PA)
(The Move Sounds)

BLEED THE PIGS / THETAN – split LP

Two Tennessee powerhouses combine on a monstrous HC / grind split. THETAN is a rare bass / drums duo that never leaves you wanting two more strings—eight tracks of relentless start / stop and blast beats and perfectly timed interludes to break up the mania. BLEED THE PIGS is an absolute powerhouse of blinding blasts, crushing slows and a foreboding atmosphere…but mostly it's the blasts. Vocals are desperate and well beyond harsh, making the music seem even more manic than it already is. Both bands were new to me, and both bands knocked me on my ass. (WN)
(Anti-Corp / Dead Tank)

BORN LOOSE – "Blowout" LP

Pretty dang consistent hard rockin' punk / punk'n'roll with Larry May ex-CANDY SNATCHERS and Shane Konen from the excellently named VON ERICH SUICIDE MISSION (deep wrestlin' reference, deal with it). The wild vocals remind me of Rick Sims of the DIDJITS and there's tons of wailing, raucous guitar that the suburban hesher in me can always appreciate—especially on anthems like "Whiskey Holiday" and slasher-movie speed punkers like "Driller Killer." (JD)
(Hound Gawd!)

BURNING KITCHEN – "Discography" 2xLP

Let us briefly peer back into the last two decades of Swedish non-crust punk history. Looking past the boom, circa 2005, of what has endearingly been referred to as "photo-shoot punk," you will find BURNING KITCHEN, starting up in the mid '90s and calling it quits by the turn of the millennium. They kept it powerful, catchy, explicitly political, and sincere as fuck, making their music a vehicle for the discussion of important themes including the combatting of patriarchy and state repression… and the *X-Files*. Their fervent defense of refugee rights back in the '90s should also be noted: *"If you believe they have a choice, picture yourself in their situation."* This is everything punk should be because a truly extraordinary punk band should embolden the unskilled to start a band. Their stripped-down, power-chord fueled sound with captivating melodies did just that for me. In short, this is essential. You should get this and then check out SJU SVÅRA ÅR, a more recent project with the same emblematic vocalist. (LT)
(Man in Decline)

CAMEREON – "Lazy Sod" CD

Imagine a combination of psychobilly, MOTÖRHEAD, traditional Japanese hardcore and OPERATION IVY. Yeah, CAMEREON is a tough adjustment, but it's well worth the effort. The Japanese HC comparison shines brighter as the CD progresses, and this short disc is full-throttle from start to finish. CAMEREON is further proof that Japan does not need your strict genre guidelines and will produce bands that rock harder than yours. (WN)
(MCR Company)

THE CARNIVAL – "Hengen Juhlaa" EP

Grotesque and echoing in the darkest chambers of maniacal insanity, this is something like BASTARD and DEATH SIDE meets CRETIN with chords reminiscent of ARCHGOAT. It is so weird and pulverizing. Fast like TERVEET KÄDET. Slow like TERVEET KÄDET. Bizarre and ghastly like TERVEET KÄDET. If Edgar Allen Poe played hardcore, he might be dead into the CARNIVAL. #EAPstagedive. Not sure I've heard anything this inflammatory since RAJOITUS. Mad props to these Finns for creating something so bleak and unique. Wild woodcut cover art. (JR)
(Krypta / Paha Tukka Clämä)

CHARGE 69 – "Much More Than Music Vol. 1" CD

This is a fantastic record. Very reminiscent of DIE TOTEN HOSEN's *Learning English* record where the Krauts recorded a bunch of classic UK originals with the UK singers doing the vocals. CHARGE 69 have taken it one step further (and even better!), in that they've recorded a bunch of original songs, with various luminaries providing the vocals…with each song more or less reflecting the oeuvre of the esteemed guest vocalist. Ten killer tracks and the songs featuring TV Smith (ADVERTS), Matt Dangerfield (the BOYS), Beki Bondage (VICE SQUAD), Colin (GBH), Greg Cowan (OUTCASTS), Charlie Harper (UK SUBS) and Campino (DIE TOTEN HOSEN) are up there with the best of their original output. Micky Fitz (BUSINESS), Roger Miret (AGNOSTIC

FRONT) and Arturo Bassick (LURKERS) don't shine as brightly, but mebbe that's just my personal taste. Can't wait for Volume 2! (RK)
(Combat Rock)

CHEMICALS – "Dagrip" LP

I think my radio cohort Hal Tosis digs these guys but I'm not so sold. They're in the that "drunken party band that you dance around like crazy to at the show waking up in a puddle of goo" vein but on vinyl it just ain't there. They have the rowdy charm of the MEAT SLUTS but the lyrics and song titles are tired, flat and repeated over and over. It works on a song like "Social End Product" but do I need another song about crosstops in the age of meth? They cover "Border Town" making me lust for Texacala Jones and leaving me wanting to abandon this album and see these guys live instead. (RO)
(Jonny Cat)

CHICOS DE NAZCO – "Fireside" LP

Modern psych rock with all the usual bendy notes and winding tempos. What I like about this is that their vocals remind me of ex-SPACEMEN 3 / DARKSIDE frontman Pete "Bassman" Bain with a hint of reverb on his voice. Not always the most exciting thing but this would work well as an EP or live after a bunch of substances. While I was hoping for something more like WHITE HILLS—or, again, even SPACEMEN 3—this comes off more like the VERVE with a giant pedal board and light show in a dive bar. (JD)
(HoZac)

CHRISTOPHER PATTERSON / DUDMAN – "Controlled by Hatred" split 10"

CHRISTOPHER PATTERSON has a song on here heaping scorn on bands who are jumping on the new school powerviolence bandwagon, but it seems to me like that is exactly what they are doing. Glass houses, man! Whatever though, I love this shit, old or new. Reminds me of PLUTOCRACY or SPAZZ. Like those bands, these guys throw in some cheesy hip-hop beats which I could really do without. Stick to grinding powerviolence and I'm in. The production on the DUDMAN side is so gnarly that I can't help but love it. It sounds like they recorded the drums in some distant basement, then turned them all the way up. This is some extra harsh Japanese fastcore, filled to the brim with rage. Just when I was thinking, "damn, these guys don't let up for even a second," they busted into an awkward reggae breakdown, temporarily killing my buzz. Kind of lame but fuck it, this record's sick anyway! (BA)
(TVG)

CHURCH OF HYSTERIA – "Suburban Sex Dungeon" CD

A weirdly tangled weave of delicate and heavy styles, like they just listened to DIRTY THREE and MELVINS for a month straight. I can see myself getting super high and *thoroughly* enjoying the manic awkwardness and the way-out-of-the-ordinary style changes. Possibly. (DZ)
(Fulsome Prism)

CLEANSING WAVE – "Crude" EP

One of Worcester, Mass's greatest treasures returns with five more songs of destructive, pummeling hardcore / punk. I've been a fan of this band since their first demo back in 2011 and I love seeing the ways they've both progressed and stayed true to their original sound. The reverb on Melissa's vocals has been dialed down a little bit and she double-tracks some choice lines here and there to give it more force. The lyrics remain dark and deep in ways that should inspire other singers to take some notes. The band exhibits more dynamics than on past releases, rather than just blasting through each song. The opener "Drifting" destroys. Everything feels more honed and precise. Closer "Thrones" ends in such a heavy stoner groove (sorry) that I immediately feel bad for any band having to play after them at a show. It's a perfect hardcore record. The disc itself is "three-sided," meaning that halfway through the first side, you have to pick up the needle and put it at the end of the record—then you can hear the next song as the needle makes its way back towards the beginning. As a gimmick, it's a pretty good one, but in practice, it's a little annoying. That's my only complaint, and it's not even a big one. If you were wondering, the other greatest treasures of Worcester are the TERRIBLES, Hotel Vernon, Turtle Boy and Jacob Berendes. (GH)
(Man In Decline)

CØNDITIØN – "Actual Hell" 12"

Grace is really into this one. She loves that one song on side one (the one that goes "nee-nee-nee-nee"). *[Ed. note: The song is called "Indictment."]* While immediately recognizing that song as a standout, I wasn't so sold on this on first listen. The band name is dull, there's a dumb devil skull on the cover, and the title? *Actual Hell*? I'll show you Actual Hell, kid. This kind of DISCHARGE / DISCLOSE / Swedish-style punk is like The Blues to me, though. While the beats and rhythms may be the same ones repeated over and over through generations, no two old black dudes are going to play them alike. It's about feeling and rage, and these gents have it in spades. The sound is fucking *huge* and the singer just builds and builds in self-castrating shrieks and cries. The "dee-dee-dee-dee" song fucking rules, too. (RO)
(Iron Lung)

COUCH POTATOES – "Excess All Areas" CD

This is an album that was recorded in 1992 and is finally being released. This UK band put out some of these songs on a couple of their singles. I remember their second full-length, which was officially released in 1995. Anyways, these guys were influenced by ALL / DESCENDENTS and DAG NASTY. This really sounds a lot like the DAG NASTY's *Field Day* LP. This is not essential but it is pretty good if you like the genre. (RL)
(Boss Tuneage)

CYCLOPS – "Escape From Cyclops Island" LP

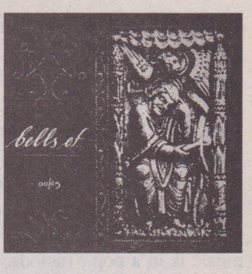
A goofy and fun garage punk band where the two members dress up like cyclopes. The duo is Tina Lucchesi formerly of the TRASHWOMEN and BOBBYTEENS and Jonny Cat of the CHEMICALS. It's frantic, wild and of course silly. Not all the songs have "Eye" in the title, but those are the ones I like best. This LP is a rerelease of the 10" on Surfin' Ki Records. (CK)
(Jonny Cat)

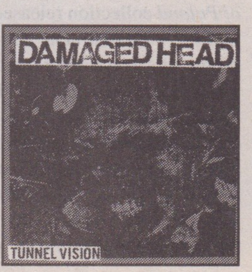
DAMAGED HEAD – "Tunnel Vision" LP

This Swedish band plays big, anthemic hardcore punk with urgent vocals and occasional rock leads that bring to mind ANNIHILATION TIME right after they ditched Fred. It's tight and energetic, but ultimately nondescript and for the most part quite formulaic. The riffs are a little above average, but not enough to make these songs memorable—except for the title track, a great slower number with a cool riff and vocal effects, and a few other songs towards the end. They probably get the pit going when they play, though. (DG)
(Man In Decline)

DEAD METEPHORS – "Terror" EP

Not a typo, it's DEAD METEPHORS. Tracks played by this Wisconsin band in 1990/91 now see the light of day 25 years later, re-recorded by the original lineup in 2015. It's 1990 all right: punk rock in the midst of the trending rise of the emerging emo/pop punk onslaught, and I can only assume that these guys managed to avoid all that period's pitfalls before they broke up. These 2015 take of these tracks is not channeling any of the DC emo or Bay Area pop or East Coast *hahd-cawr* clichés, they instead go straight down the pipe à la a mid '80s political band of the type that would have played the Farm, or ABC No Rio. Not exceptional or anything, but nothing I would rip off the turntable with a wearied disdain like I would with EMBRACE,





or MR. T. EXPERIENCE, or UNIFORM CHOICE, respectively. (RW)
(Plaza Eight)

THE DEATHLESS – "The Gates to the Deathless Are Open" EP
This well-polished collaboration features a spoken word intro, four songs, and a lecture. The talks and the lyrics are focused on Buddhism. The music is in a pop / melodic hardcore vein. I cringed at some of hokey moments where the band is at their most commercially accessible. It's a big club, real sound system / real bouncers approach, marketed as hardcore, but too much of this is cornball rock music. In the song "1985," he says, "you introduced me to the Hare Krishnas..." Fuck Hare Krishna! Older readers will remember a terrible time when it was trendy. It reflects poorly on hardcore that there was ever room for this garbage. These dudes are nostalgic! I'm nauseated. "Destroy! The suffering caused by clinging," they say. I'm not into spiritual solutions because our problems are material. Pigs denying access to food, shelter and health care to those who can't or won't further enrich them; state repression as embodied by police and prisons—meditation or "mindfulness" are not solutions to these issues. The lecture is aimed at a punk / radical demographic, talking about how all religions, including Buddhism, should be destroyed (here I paraphrase—on 33 RPM you can fit a lot of talking and I found it challenging to sit through the first time) "because so much of what's taught as Buddhism today is fake," etc. This record is a lot like previous efforts at religious evangelism into the punk scene. Buddhism isn't inherently shitty like Hinduism or the Judeo-Christian-Islam triumvirate, but here it's another attempt to de-politicize punk. Fuck that. (JM)
(Chapter 11)

DEGRADS – LP
A new wave band from 1982-era New York state, the DEGRADS recorded a ton of material to cassette, but only put out a two-song 45 in 1983. This LP samples that archive, including the 45 tracks. You've got a very solid approach here that never actually goes into a straight "punk" mode, flirting more with USA post-punk/indie moves, as well as some keyboard-dominated ballads with "psychotic" lyrics that kids in their early twenties used to think were super weird, mannn. It's an okay record, but lacks that standout signature track to stimulate instant recall. "Oh, the DEGRADS do that song...." The liners are pretty clear that they didn't take this too seriously for most of their time together, and that's the approach I'll have to this record when I see it used for six dollars next year. (RW)
(Cameleon)

DEZERTER – "Kolaboracja" LP
Though technically not DEZERTER's first LP—that honor belongs to the essential *Underground Out of Poland* collection released by *Maximum Rocknroll* in 1987—*Kolaboracja* was the band's debut album proper. It's a wonder the record ever came out in the first place, given the fact that Poland was a Soviet Union satellite state at the time and all output had to be approved by government censors, and even more of a wonder still that it's so defiantly fierce and powerful! The complete story is detailed in the liner notes, but they pulled off the original 1988 release through a combination of stubbornness, subterfuge and pure luck. Its sarcastic title, which translates to "Collaboration," was removed from the original version, and several lyrics were bleeped out, but the final product is a still a true classic of 1980s punk rock. Unlike the *Underground*... LP that drew from several years' worth of studio and live sources, *Kolaboracja* is a more complete, cohesive statement. Throughout the disc one can discern echoes of UK hardcore (DISCHARGE et al.), post-punk (early KILLING JOKE, GANG OF FOUR) and even reggae (widely popular in Polish underground music in the '80s), but DEZERTER is one of those artists who incorporated rather than mimicked their influences. This is a group at their peak—tight, inventive, determined—and the album's urgency is simply undeniable. Pasażer delivers an excellent reissue, adding a thick booklet with text and lyrics in Polish and English. Highly recommended! (CS)
(Pasażer)

DEZERTER – "Wszyscy Przeciwko Wszystkim" LP
The third studio LP from DEZERTER and the first after the fall of Communism in Poland, *Wszyscy* shows them taking the turn towards the less-hardcore sound that would define them through the '90s and beyond. There is more than enough here to keep the purists happy (though some of those tracks are re-recordings of songs from the first two records), but there are moments that make me wonder if I would actually be interested if this weren't DEZERTER. The band is legendary, but I don't need to hear ventures into mathy / funk punk like "Bicie" ever again. When they lose me, the vocals have no teeth or urgency and the band comes off like regular '90s alt/punk. Theere's more than enough here to still enthusiastically endorse the record, though—listen to this version of "Jutro" and your head will cave in. DEZERTER have always been masters at injecting catchy melodies into edgy hardcore (related: I never really noticed SUBHUMANS comparisons before this listen, but they are undeniable, especially with the bass), and their approach did much to shape the style often written off simply as "Eastern European punk." Their efforts are to be studied and built upon. (WN)
(Pasażer)

DÖDLÄGE – "Stench of Death" EP
Ten-track EP of blistering punk hardcore D-beat from the Pacific Northwest for freaks for HIATUS and E.N.T. I am stoked to be reviewing this dense banger. My socks stink just listening to this. It has all the D-beat bounce and grumble you are looking for. Q: And kidding? A: No. No thought goes into this review, and why should I have one? I'm not even allowed that moment, because this intense D-beat offering demands time for only admiration and retrospection. Vicious and fussing, vocals that carry out a moment longer than most recent efforts, distant bass lines that usher in the chaotic destruction. DOOM or be damned, if you're interested in anything I have to say about this, get on it now. (JR)
(Counteract / La Humanidad Es La Plaga / Sacred Plague / Up the Punx / Wargame)

DOKUGA – LP
A total face-ripper from Portugal. Lightning-fast metallic D-beat hardcore that never takes a breath—every single track is a banger. The "slower" songs are hard-hitting and in your face, but the emphasis is on high speed and high energy...and though they don't rip solos very often, when they do, the solos are deadly. Nothing unpredictable here but if you want what DOKUGA does (and I do), then you will not be disappointed (I'm not). (WN)
(Garagem)

THE DUTCH RUDDERS – "On Verra" CD
From BELGIUM, these guys do raspy pop punk with some jagged emo overtones in the vein of DILLINGER FOUR and RED CITY RADIO with some great guitar interplay as well as cool buildups. The vocals can get a bit rough in the screaming department as they take on a CRIMPSHRINE style, toeing that reckless versus not so great line. Nine songs that keep mixing it up with favorable results. Cool band. (RL)
(Monster Zero)

THE ELSINORES – "New Forms" LP
I heard three seconds of this last month and thought it might be some cool UNREST-style music but this is pretty much an up-tempo goth-pop record. Here is testament to the fact that there are more bands out there that took cues from MERCHANDISE than from NEON BLUD, one of the great injustices of our times. Fans of SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES or the CHAMELEONS might vibe to this if there isn't a band that sounds exactly like this in their city already. At a certain point in the next decade, young men of this generation will trade out their chorus pedals for a DJ and bands like these will start to sound more like INCUBUS. (EW)
(Dead Tank / IFB / Popnihil)

THE EPIDEMIC – "Losing Control" EP
Generic band name and artwork. I think they're trying for an '80s British thing from their good intros and not so great lyrics, but this comes across as mediocre old US hardcore. If this was done in the pre-internet age by sixteen-year-olds in the middle of nowhere with a couple crappy tapes for inspiration, this would fly but you really have to step it up these days. "Senseless Action" has some of the frenzied chaos similar to fellow Bostonians JERRY'S KIDS but the vocals are really commonplace. This was recorded in 2006 and one of them is dead. I'm really sorry for that but I can't get behind this one. This was put out by folks who release some good stuff but...I tried...can't do it. (RO)
(Loud Punk / Total Fucker)

ERA DEL VACIO – LP
I don't sit around listening to goth / deathrock much these days, but good tunes are good tunes, right? Mexico City all-stars pump out a batch of well thought-out, strong material once again. This is pretty hard-hitting stuff, with a lot of nice guitar and bass riffs, and plenty of reverb to drown your sorrows in. My favorite track is the faster "Más Allá," showing they really do well to not get stuck on any specific tempo throughout the record. This is probably better (or at least just as great) as your favorite current deathrock record. (MA)
(Cintas Pepe)

EXTREME NOISE TERROR – CD
Yeesh, I kind of wanted this to be just terrible, but instead it's just kind of there. It's as good as *Retro-Bution*, and better than the dire metal stuff, but of course it's nowhere near as good as the truly great stuff. Competently played, well-recorded but just

not compelling enough to call it a comeback. The insert with the lyrics translated into Japanese does have a rad drawing by Jhonio 44 from GLOOM, and the OUTO cover is cool, so there's that I guess. (AU)
(MCR Company)

F – "Live to Kill" CD
New album from the '80s Florida band. Actually, this only features singer Flash, but he did write the songs back in the day so make your own judgment call on that. It is metallic rock with dumb lyrics. It sounds pretty similar to the old stuff, just more produced. I have said it many times, I don't hold grudges against people hanging on to that last shred of punk glory. However, without a historical reference I wouldn't even bother with this record. (CK)
(self-released)

FARBEN LEHRE – "Projekt Punk" CD
This is my first introduction to these Polish punks who have been around since 1986 (!!). This may not be the release to judge their sound by because this is essentially a covers album. The core band got together with friends and interpreted their versions of tracks by DEZERTER, MOSKWA, SEDES and many more. Understandably, the sound is all over the map, but still within the confines of melodic punk, post-punk and rock. Lots of gang vocals. It sounds like a fun time for all, but it just made me want to track down the original versions for myself…which is possibly the point. (GH)
(Lou & Rocked Boys)

FARMERS – "August 11, 1984" LP
This is one of those quintessential "quality archive" releases: a band that never had an official release at the time, members of legendary art-punk bands (Daved Hild from the GIRLS, Roger Miller from MISSION OF BURMA), and a nice looking package on Feeding Tube. It's all live material in a style that combines the approach of both of their previous bands, and Hild has that classic "art-punk" yelping/plain-spoken singing approach that has been pre-chewed candy to record collecting babies for decades now. It's also one of those "quality archive" records that you are going to listen to when it's new, shelve, and forget about it. Nothing knocks you on your ass. It's not a *bad* record. Just: there's an endlessly vicious fight to get turntable time in my room, and this LP is not going to push aside...uhhh...MIKE REP or TOTENKOPF or SIDEWINDERS or MAGMA or REGISTRATORS or...(RW)
(Feeding Tube)

FATE VS FREE WILLY – "New Dead End" LP
Worst band name of the issue?! Although the cover looks more mysterious than this, I was expecting some goofy pop punk frat jargon based on band name alone. Instead you get gnarled and fuzzed out guitars with coolly direct female vocals. They're Finnish! Maybe they used to be a novelty noise band, then shaped up? They do a good job of merging No Wave with *Nuggets* in a manner that reminds me of classic era SONIC YOUTH, definitely heavy on that caveman stomp and the unhinged quality would appeal to fans of PUSSY GALORE and the COACHWHIPS equally. There's a pop appeal to the nihilism, though it's more of a bad trip than a goofy adventure. I really like the singer's voice and I think it makes the band. Worth checkin' out! Distributed by Stickfigure in the US. (LG)
(If Society)

FATIGUE – "Dogs Bodies" EP
A supergroup from San Francisco that I've never seen. This reminds me of mid-tempo, rockin' POISON IDEA. The singer sounds nothing like Jerry A. and they don't really sound much like that band, but these songs have that fist-in-the-air anthemic quality. It's time to put your gal (or guy, or non-gender-specific weight burden) on your shoulders and shout along "Every Dog Has Its Day!" with appropriate furiousity. Side two kicks off and it's…"Mongoloid"! I love fucking "Mongoloid." Well, not really but it rages into more headbanging and banner-waving frenzied fever ending with the winner for me, "Outlander." This will leave you totally slayed and gasping for air. That weird guy at Warthog Speak delivers again. (RO)
(Warthog Speak)

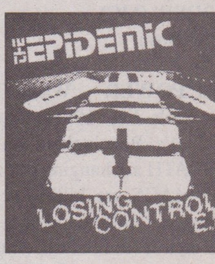
FEMME KRAWALL – 12"
Germany's FEMME KRAWALL plays fun and bouncy, yet still aggressive punk with dual vocals. The band has a real knack for pop hooks that recalls greats like KNUGEN FALLER and a less-pissed BURNING KITCHEN. It's simple and straightforward…not rocket science…but it's incredibly great and instantly catchy in ways that will stick in your head. Seven songs (and one "hidden track") on a single-sided 12". (GH)
(Spastic Fantastic)

FLAME ON – "Corrupt Mind" CD
A classic exhumation of a fairly obscure UK band from the late '80s, a time when Britain saw a huge Yank invasion in terms of style and sound, probably the most famous / successful examples of which were SNUFF, LEATHERFACE and the STUPIDS. Influenced by the likes of HÜSKER DÜ, BAD BRAINS, GOVERNMENT ISSUE, DAG NASTY et al., a whole slew of Brit kids picked up that melodic hardcore torch and ran with it. FLAME ON, hailing from the industrial Midlands, only ever released one 7" in 1991, though became fairly well known in the zine world with three demos (back in the days when bands released demo tapes like records) in 1988, 1989 and 1990. The entirety of said aforementioned output is included on this, so for completists, there you have it! I have to say that 32 tracks and 80 minutes get a little much / samey halfway in, but it's all here if you want it! (RK)
(Boss Tuneage)

FRIED EGG – "The Incredible Flexible Egg" flexi EP
The Lumpy-drawn cover threw me for a loop and had me expecting some bleeps and bloops, but this is no-frills aggro hardcore out of Richmond, VA. The vocalist barks like a too-drunk Jerry A. over the mostly 1-2-1-2 drumming and seldom lets up. The guitar sounds nice and big and unpolished, and the breakdowns put this in the modern age and don't try to obscure the fact. "Sugs" is the well-arranged delicious yolky middle in this FRIED EGG sandwich; the other two songs are the savory but not-as-good toasted and buttered bread pieces. (DG)
(self-released)

FRUIT PUNCH – "The 7" Collection" CD
This Philly queercore band's sound is primarily rooted in '80s and '90s straightedge hardcore, along with hints of melodic Swedish metal and hardcore, though without all the bullshit, machismo and pretension that the former would imply. The lyrics have an extremely earnest delivery, the gang vocals are more abundant than a pretzel dumpster, and from what I can gather, the songs are a mix of personal, political, serious, and fun—even the "stabbed in the back" ones are presented in a way that I can empathize with, which is rare. I picture bike-riding kids in short-shorts who are vegan, straightedge, fun-loving and care about shit. My only complaint is that this CD doesn't come with a lyric sheet. I am a fan though, and I've always wished more bands like this existed. (DG)
(Marsten House)

FUCKMORGUE – "Dead, I Will Not Be Forgotten" LP
Wow, I don't really fuck with screamo (or skramz if you must) but this is an exception. The name made me think I was gonna hate it, but I was caught off guard. FUCKMORGUE was a band from Winnipeg in the early to mid 2000s. They sound like PG.99 with SUMMONING-style keyboards and LUDICRA riffs. It's heavy, grim and atmospheric. This is a vinyl reissue of their CD-only album plus a lost demo. Some of this stuff sounds a



bit dated, but that's the point of nostalgia, right? You have to take the good with the bad and please just take this. (AP)
(Pasażer)

THE GENERATORS – "Welcome to the End" LP
If you believe the insert (and I don't see a reason why you shouldn't) this was originally released in 1998 and was the band's debut. This LP is the first vinyl release of the music. The guitar riffs might remind you of the CLASH or STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, without actually sounding like either of those bands. It's classic sing-along punk, catchy and melodic. This is good, like Top Ten good, but I think the band made better music afterwards. That's actually good. Too many bands blow their wad with their first release. (KK)
(Dr. Strange)

THE GEROS – "Genocide Or Suicide" EP
After a totally ace demo (a few of the same tunes featured here), Osaka's GEROS make their vinyl debut in truly dashing fashion. This is exactly the sort of single that gets assholes like me frothing and chomping and pontificating on perfect punkness, as the GEROS nail it on all fronts. The whole '77 or even (gasp!) garage punk aesthetic, when adopted by the current crop of Japanese punks, takes a heavier, confidently hard-rocking turn. See LOUDER, FRANTIC STUFFS and these GEROS as prime examples, though I'm inclined to tag these folks as the most adept *Killed By Death* practitioners of the lot. Snot and fire, chums. Assembled in a handmade sleeve with all manner of color variants, inserts and hand-stamped what-have-yous imaginable? Limited as all get-out? Yes and yup. Probably already gone, like my youth. Ahhh, the stuff of my dreams, these GEROS!!! (MC)
(Killer Boy)

GIRL POWER – "White Goods" EP
It feels like 1972, it's 1986, it's the UK, it's NYC, it's Birmingham on The Bowery, BLACK SABBATH are hanging out in front of CBGBs, while CRO-MAGS are killing it inside, it's muffled and rattling, and all the kids are iggin' hard on the block with their teeth filed to points. The production is low. The attitudes are high. The boards are rumbling, the world is crumbling; here are your anthems for rats that grooves like street cats. Feels like drugs and sounds like death, goddamn, bless this mess. Five songs about mass production packaging shit and consumer toxins. This is GIRL POWER. Recommended. (JR)
(Kibou)

THE GIRLS – "Punk-Dada Pulchritude" LP
First things first: the cover art is somewhat wretched! The picture of the band is really cool / stark / wild and gets across the art punk reality of their sound, but it's covered with this terrible K-Mart punky chips ahoy *Never Mind the Bollocks* Jamie Reid lite font overlay. This LP is a collection of early recordings made as the band evolved towards the sound on their must-have 45 on PERE UBU's Hearthan label, the otherworldly "Jeffrey I Hear You." (A truly strange and haunting ode to the ghostly presence of the singer's dead twin brother.) Their music is a surreal take on the possibility of punk rather than a generic template; you can definitely see why they would end up on Hearthan…Side A is all scraped out sculptural wildness, a "Sister Ray" live bootleg with added Hieronymous Bosch and a little PERE UBU zam that is really quite ravishing. Flip the record over and "Any Other Way It Would Be Different" is like an outtake from their 45, with a propulsive later VELVETS feeling. I got really into the zoned out stuff, but it's cool to have a pop interlude, ya know? The last song is some true ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS wildness for proto-punk fetishists! The end of the world is a guitar sound with that distinctive DAVID THOMAS meets TOMATA DU PLENTY vocal howl. A killer kollection! There are a bunch more the GIRLS reissues on the horizon, a live CD forthcoming from Feeding Tube, a double LP from Radio Raheem—I have no complaints about this fact though it would rule if someone would mail me the GIRLS *Reunion* LP… (LG)
(Feeding Tube)

GREEN TERROR – LP
The cover features a drawing of a skeletal punk ripping a bong and flipping the bird. Simplistic? Sure, but it sums up my general attitude pretty well, so I'm into it. Musically they stick to straight-ahead, tried-and-true grindcore, which also sums up my attitude pretty well. Harkens back to the classics like CARCASS, NAPALM DEATH and especially TERRORIZER. If you like hot knives and heavy metal, then this one's for you. (BA)
(Agromosh)

GROSS POINTE – "Bad Seed" EP
Yeah. This is fuzzy and garagey and even a little surfy. It's also sort of heavy and dark. And it's driving and melodic and pretty badass. Don't get me wrong; this is punk for sure. Most of all, it's outstanding. (KK)
(HoZac)

GULAG BEACH – "Favela Blues" LP
This is fucking great! Awesome lyrics mostly dealing with the governments of Cambodia and North Korea. Musically, the recording is perfectly rough, abrasive and super fun. This is on constant repeat at my house. Get this shit and go buck wild! (DZ)
(Maniac Attack)

HALLELUJAH! – 12"
One-side 12" of mayhemic noise punk, though not in the way of, say, DISCLOSE. Tons of feedback, distortion and *Mind Is a Terrible Thing…*-era MINSTRY and BIG BLACK-type of confrontational vocals or even harkening back to RANCID HELL SPAWN. There's even a hint of the "way out there" Japanese psych scene à la HIGH RISE, especially on the sheets of skree on "Fugazzin"—plus they throw in a gonzo hardcore track. Really great sound at every turn. (JD)
(Depression House)

HARRY PUSSY – LP
This originally came out over twenty years ago and it continues to be from the future. It's wild and violent but also gorgeous and sad. It consist only of a mangled guitar, drums continually crashing apart, occasional screams making it past the chaos. It sounds like the most base catharsis recorded onto a boom box in an abandoned building and the neighbors fucking haaaaate you and its all created by only two people. There are definitely songs here, it is composed and repeatable, but you wouldn't know it if you were functioning on listening cues alone. It holds the sounds of improv and then shreds them, grinding them through a punk filter until it's maybe noise but not. This record has been a heavy influence on guitar weirdos and drum freaks for decades, causing the likes of MAGIK MARKERS, CHRIS CORSANO, WOLF EYES, and immeasurable more noise nerds to exist in the world. It still sounds terrifying. It's still relevant—if not more so—and its reemergence will hopefully cause a whole new generation of weirdos to freak out. (MM)
(Superior Viaduct)

HELTA SKELTA – "Beyond The Black Stump" LP
If the album title was the address where this record was recorded it would make sense. Scratchy, melted-brain dispatches from the Outback, as if the band had been huddled around a faulty transistor radio in a shed near Ayer's Rock and only managed to pick up John Peel on the BBC World Service. There's a dejected attempt at melody but the end result is a morbid pop jangle. Lyrically, several songs take on the conventions of working class masculinity in a clever way, which reminds me a little of fellow Aussies LOW LIFE. Much like a lot of stuff from Australia these days, HELTA SKELTA have nailed what it seems like they're trying to do; if you told me this was an Australian KBD band from '79 reared on the BUZZCOCKS, I could be convinced. Great stuff. (AM)
(Deranged)

HURRICÄDE – "Anachronisms" LP
Do you like screamo? Do you like structure and syncopation in your post-hardcore? Do you like loaded, agitated music made by emotionally charged youths baffled by concept of time? Then HURRICÄDE from Girona—in the northeastern-most corner in Spain—will be right up your alley! Screamo vocals that are not actually annoying (more compelling, exasperated) and multi-layered compositions and off-kilter chords will keep you on your toes. The drumming is imaginative and on-point throughout—I especially liked it on "Adrift." The full, warm bass and post-rock crescendos that creep in here and there, thankfully, keep this from being too mathy to keep up with, and the production—which on "The Wires," I won't lie, reminded me of FUGAZI—make this feel intimate while still exuding hostility and inner restlessness. There is a twisting and turning intensity driving the whole record forward and an evident angst to the whole execution, which is as precise as it is dynamic. "Las Arañas" (which is the only song sung in Spanish) has a killer intro riff and somewhat cinematic sensation to it—my fave track on the record. For fans of AT THE DRIVE IN, REFUSED, SAETIA, but also, weirdly, I think for fans of BREACH, NEGATIVE STANDARDS and even HELL IS FOR HEROES? It appears they have two 10"s from 2008 and 2010 and that they recently played their last show. Good swan song, I'd say. (LA)
(Bridal Horse / Cakeiah / Slatamarger)

INDEX – "Demo 2012" EP
A short-lived but still fresh SF band that featured members of BRILLIANT COLORS, CULTURE KIDS, VIAL, FLESH WORLD and JUMP OFF A BUILDING. I remember losing my mind seeing them bash out this wildness in a basement in an era of this city that seems so far from the current reality

of tech bros on hoverboards reading Ayn Rand, even though it was a mere few years ago. At any rate the music is somewhat what you would think members of those bands would come up with, bratty/snarled punk that wouldn't seem out of place on one of those *Bloodstains* comps, rad RUTTO style vocals over the eternal sounds of disgruntled youth-core. "I Tried to Deal" is the mixtape staple! Such a killer jam. There are only 100 of these 45s in existence so act fast! (LG)
(Vague Absolutes)

INKWIZYCJA – "Wojny Nie Będzie" LP
This is the second LP by Kraków's INKWIZYCJA we have here at the *MRR* compound. The first one's from 1990! This one is well worth getting. The music is complex and intricate, but stays on point. Imagine a full-length you wanna hear all the way through! Most times, that's hard—not here. Depending on the song, they're some combination of ominous, martial, tight, swinging, and heavy. The production is full and balanced. Most every track kills. Moments where my attention wanders are very few. The lyrics are in Polish and, going by the English translations provided, are rad—poetic but concise. This is so great, I want one. (JM)
(Pasażer)

JOUST – "Sprouting Seeds / Ouroboros"
This is one of the worst band names ever. Seriously, it's tied for last. Too bad, because the music is actually pretty awesome. I mean, if you like music that is catchy as hell, has awesome guitar riffs and is a little bit fuzzy and also a little bit spastic, it's awesome. Jesus, this is good. I can't stop listening. My head is bouncing. I can't stop. This is crazy. Limited to 300, it looks like. (KK)
(Fatal Seizure)

JOY SUBTRACTION – "Hate Will Keep Us Together" LP
JOY SUBTRACTION plays an anachronistic blend of punk, straight up rawk and some prog-lite. They personally check NOMEANSNO as an influence on their website and it makes sense in more than one way. 1989 was probably a big year for at least one of these songwriters, as there's some *Wrong* in there, as well as some JANE'S ADDICTION and some of the boisterous attitude of the RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS, if not much of their sound. They also cover a BIG BOYS song. This record is a bit of a mess, more of a collection of songs than a thought-out album, and it feels like the focus was on technical musicianship rather than enjoyable songwriting. Perhaps because of this, the record flies by in a blur. It's goofy and you can tell fun was being had, but if you aren't going to commit to repeated deep listening—or you don't already know this band, these songs, or perhaps these dudes—I cannot recommend this LP. (LP)
(Sailor)

KHMER / LIVSTID – split 10"
Madrid's KHMER delivers up some triumphantly melodic blackened crust, with plenty of grim atmosphere giving you time to contemplate the impending apocalypse. For all their harsh spookiness, these songs are actually pretty damn catchy. Kind of like a crusty AT THE GATES. Definitely a cut above most of the bands doing the melodic crust thing these days. Norway's LIVSTID crushes us with some grinding D-beat rage. They throw in these creepy sing-along parts every now and then that make me feel real uneasy, so that's pretty sick. Reminds me of SKITSYSETEM with a little NAPALM DEATH magic. I'd snatch this one up, if I were you! (BA)
(Disiplin Media / Halo of Flies / Long Legs Long Arms)

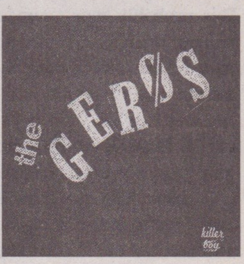
KID CONGO & THE PINK MONKEYBIRDS – "Bruce Juice / El Cucuy"
This record features two groovy instrumentals. They sound real nice with a kitschy '60s style. Maybe not everyday listening, but this will spice up your party or DJ night. (CK)
(In The Red)

KITCHEN'S FLOOR – "Battle of Brisbane" LP
Haven't heard much from this Australian band in a while, but one listen to *Battle of Brisbane*, their third and latest album, shows they've gotten better at communicating the worst. That's praise: KITCHEN'S FLOOR focuses on bitterness, anguish and anger from a unique pop perspective. The songs collected here fluctuate from sounding big and classically pinned to VU-influenced '80s outfits to moments of drugged, darkly personal rock like PINK REASON and the like. It all works and it's never a light listen. Recommended for sure. I believe a domestic pressing is scheduled from HoZac shortly. (MC)
(Bruit Direct)

LEFTÖVER CRACK – "Volume III: Constructs of the State" LP/CD
Fukk what you know. Straight up, just screw your preconceptions about this band, fukk whatever you think about their fans, their label…just listen to this record. Loud. Repeatedly. *Constructs of the State* is the third studio LP from LEFTÖVER CRACK, the first in more than a decade, and doubtless their best work to date. A melodic and anthemic punk (yes, with ska) band with serious teeth, but their ability to casually drop a churning thrash metal banger like "Slave to the State" is so unspeakably effortless that it's clear these kids are up to something more. Sturgeon's lyrics are brilliant, taking subjects like addiction and mental health and presenting them (appropriately) as complicated ("Loneliness & Heartache" and "Vicious Constructs" respectively), and generally making hating cops seem downright dignified (because it fucking is). It's impossible to describe the effort that's gone into this record—an absolutely advanced release in virtually every way with a host of guests contributing musically (full disclosure: your reviewer is one of those guests, though the editors were surely not aware of this when they assigned records this month), visually, artistically…it's more than a band, and more than a band effort. Yeah, you can keep thinking of LEFTÖVER CRACK as that ska / punk band with the gutter punk fanbase if you wish, but doing so will punish no one but yourself. This is one of the best records of 2015. (WN)
(Fat Wreck)

LIFE – "Violence, Peace and Peace Research" LP
Tokyo's LIFE delivers maximum-intensity crust, relentless and totally off the rails, and this 2013 release has just been repressed in North America by Desolate (thanks). Guitar leads are pure Japanese hardcore, while the balance of the attack is harder to digest…but it's so worth the effort. Nuances in the recording of this record fukk with your head and your conceptions of how punk and crust are supposed to be delivered, and LIFE messes with sounds in subtly brilliant ways that alter the digestion of their songs. Lyrics assail human greed of all varieties, and express confusion as much as despair—which is exactly how the record makes me feel….anxious and hyper, ready for action and ready for more. "Dead Silent Spring" rivals any apocalyptic metal-crust track you could conjure, while "The End of Mother Nature" is just pure rage…and the cover of DISCLOSE's "Conquest" is a bold move that is a total success. (WN)
(Desolate)

LIFE STINKS – "You'll Never Make It" LP
You know how they say if you put a certain number of monkeys in front of typewriters, one of them will eventually type the complete works of Shakespeare? Well, imagine those same monkeys were given some gear, forced to listen to IGGY & THE STOOGES on repeat, and play along with it. *You'll Never Make It* is those sessions put to tape. This record is haunting, scary, atmospheric, snotty and inept. LIFE STINKS is the perfect soundtrack to a bender, to bad mistakes, and to full-on regret. "Sliding Down a Wire" is a personal favorite and reminds me of the COSMIC PSYCHOS, just grosser. For fans of: substance abuse, lurking outside the Betty Ford Clinic, peeing when you wake up. (MW)
(S-S)



LIMATOR – "Keropudas Barbeque" LP

This definitely fits right in with the tradition of just plain weird Finnish bands. This is on the fringes of punk, droning noise rock riffs butting up against shoe-gaze-y synths and minimalist drumming. The driving "Reutuaapa" is definitely the hit, with a paranoid vocal and sharp riffs backed by ghostly synth wailing. The B-side includes forays into straight up synth-pop ("Ovi Käy") and acoustic balladry ("Kirjanpoltto"). The eclectic quality of the material and embrace of pop sounds recalls Eastern European, particularly Russian, punk of the '80s and early '90s. This probably won't appeal to a majority of *MRR* readers, but if you're into more out-there, risk-taking stuff this is an interesting release. (AU)
(Roku)

LOVE MOON – "Clouded Bliss" LP

"Do you wanna walk the walk?" This is the first line I heard that stood out from this Oakland heavy rock / sorta noise rock band. So, since they just reminded me of "Nature Boy" Ric Flair in between all their heavy riffing, they're off to a good start. There's something really great and GODHEADSILO-ish on their super sludgey title-track; later, there's '70s arena rock vibes and some '90s shouty guy indie rock moments on "Past in Bloom" that reminds me of RODAN. In all, a good effort, just not totally spot-on. (JD)
(Drink or Die)

MALOKIO – "Senza Scampo" LP

Montreal's MALOKIO rages into this twelve-track LP from the first song and never lets up. The vocals are soaring and melodic while retaining a tough exterior that keeps my interest throughout. The lyrics, sung (and translated) in Spanish, English and French, are about the futility of borders, our fucked up future, mental health and more. MALOKIO plays melodic punk that fits strongly in the vein of LA FRACTION, POST REGIMENT and even some hints of SUICIDAS. Desperate music for desperate times. A great LP. (GH)
($PHC)

MAMA – "Speed Trap" EP

These Chicago dudes play '70s rock with Sears Tower sized hooks and basement show production. The first two songs especially betray a childhood of AM radio CHEAP TRICK and THIN LIZZY. The tracks on side B still have the hooks and a '70s vibe but more in an ADVERTS way (via JAY REATARD). Dynamite! (AM)
(HoZac)

MAMITORI ULITHI EMPRESS YONAGUNI SAN – "25/12/2013" LP

Sometimes people send records into *MRR* with the deliberate purpose of baffling the VOODOO GLOW SKULLS fans that comprise our review staff: here's this month's entry. Spectral indie-pop / shoegaze vocals (somewhere between CRANES and BLACK TAMBOURINE on the ethereality spectrum) over shambling freeform freakout guitar. Sometimes it sounds like a song's buried underneath the mess, sometimes it sounds like they're winging it and humming about something sensitive above a completely detuned NEU! jam. Recommended if you are fucked in the head. (EW)
(Bruit Direct)

MANATEEES – "Croc N My Pocket" LP

I'd rank the night I saw MANATEEES play as the single most negative, completely fucked evening of my year. I loved it! And I continue to love the band here, on LP #2, sounding more desperate and full-on pissed than previous efforts. I believe that Mr. Main-Teee Abe really does want to kill someone, just as he says in "Under the Gun." The desperation is real, you can feel it in his voice and sense it with the creeping, tough guitar scree heard across the punk pumpers here. "River of Death"? Are you fucking kidding me? There's even whistling on this album and it still stomps shit. I'm ready to participate in whatever crude, disgusting ritual of worship there is to pledge my blood to MANATEEES. Line forms behind me. (MC)
(12XU)

MANN KACKT SICH IN DIE HOSE / SAD NEUTRINO BITCHES – split EP

Two sides of kind of whatever pop hardcore. The first side sounds like maybe Warped Tour in the '90s. It's weird in a way that I don't really dig but I can appreciate that they get there not via flange and delay but instead with gang vocals that sound like children and possibly a vocoder. The second side basically sounds like NINA HAGEN in an Oi! band. (MM)
(Spastic Fantastic)

MANSION – "Early Life" LP

A two-guitar noise rock band operating in 2015 is going to garner SPRAY PAINT comparisons until they pick up a bass player, but MANSION are a very different-sounding band with a very different vocal approach. The guitars periodically drop in with sheets of white noise (I thought there was a scratch on the record for a second), and rather than layering on top of this in deadpan spoken word, vocalist Candice Lazarou figures out a way to whirl melodies in and out of the empty spaces they leave behind. At first it's a jarring and uncomfortable approach, a bully teasing you in obscure rhyme over TRUMANS WATER-style guitar riffs. By the time this record rolls into tracks like "California Priest" or "Fleshed Out," however, the footing feels steadier. "Priest" is my favorite song here, with somewhat subdued verses and real groove (cowbell included), giving space for Lazarou's vocal melodies to contend on their own, demonstrating a noisy guitar band existing outside of the loud-quiet-loud paradigm. "Fleshed Out" is a weird drift between harmonic centers, getting into some BLONDE REDHEAD territory. Overall it's a worthwhile trip. Appealingly laid out and packaged, this LP doubles as the seventeenth issue of *Degenerate*. (EW)
(Degenerate)

MARY & THE IMMACULATE REJECTIONS – "You're My #1" CD

This is a five-song EP from this Illinois trio. Gal singer / guitar player fronting this punky indie rock band. The first song is a pretty good with its layered vocals and harmonies that remind of a K Records-type band from the '90s. The other four songs stay amateur and go for charm but suffer from just not being very good although the lyrics have their humorous moments. There were lots of bands like this in the '90s—International Pop Underground Convention comes to mind—but these folks have a way to go. (RL)
(Painted Girl)

MEERCAZ AND THE VISIONS – "Get Muzzled" LP

There is something a bit off on this record. When I am intrigued, I keep listening. Now I am fascinated. MEERCAZ AND THE VISIONS do a somewhat glammy rock thing with lo-fi production. Although the sound reaches for bigness, it is kind of restrained. That gives the sound an odd tension. The songs are catchy and I like MEERCAZ's voice. Cool record. (CK)
(Sweet Rot)

MIDRAKE – CD

Mid-paced, well-produced, completely forgettable pop punk from Switzerland. (DZ)
(Monster Zero)

MIRROR MONKEYS – LP

Punk-muthafukkin-rock'n'roll. Somewhere there's some twelve-year-old kid who feels the same way about this record that I did about the BOUNCING SOULS in 2000. Somewhere this is somebody's *Hopeless Romantic* and that's probably the most MIRROR MONKEYS can ask for. I imagine when this band plays there's a sea of scaly caps covering the shaved heads of their fan base and the next time GUTTERMOUTH rolls through Germany, I imagine this band will be opening every gig. Shouts out to the cartoon monkey spray-painting a brick wall on the cover and the banana yellow vinyl, too. For fans of: date night at the DWARVES gig, slowly transitioning from punk to Oi!, new Docs. (MW)
(Left Hand Path / Maniac Attack / Riot)

THE MODERNS – "The Year of Today" EP

Even though you don't see 'em around much these days, the legions of mod revival bands that formed in the wake of the JAM's first couple LPs are proof Paul Weller's impact on the underground rivaled that of DISCHARGE or MINOR THREAT. The MODERNS from Malmö, Sweden, jumped on the mod-wagon pretty early and their 1979 self-released debut EP ticks off all the boxes. Suits, ties and Rickenbackers? Check. *My Generation* rip-off cover artwork? Check. Band logo with a mod target *and* one of the letters forming an arrow? Check and check. But these four tunes packed to the brim with youthful energy and excitement will charm even the most jaded cynic. With its trebly, choppy guitar and stomping chorus, "The Year of Today" could have been plucked from some lost *In the City*-era rehearsal demo. "Got to Have Pop" is the real anthem, of course, comped on *Powerpearls* and others. The flipside revs up with a faster, punkier tune before closing out on a BEATLES-influenced ballad, the rudimentary production and vocal harmonies only adding to the appeal. Original copies are now well into "horror prices" territory and even the late-'00s Japanese reissue is getting scarce, so this nicely assembled repress comes just in time for the next generation of modernists. (CS)
(Hosehead)

MUERTE – LP

What makes this different from the glut of dark punk records flooding the planet? MUERTE's recent full-length is fukkn *punk*…and it happens to also be dark. Not remotely afraid to delve into mid-tempo, catchy alt / punk drivers like "De Noche En La Cuidad" and give them their own feel, Mexico City's MUERTE are just as fearless when it comes to bursting headlong into the kind of reckless assault that

made their previous bands (TERCER MUNDO, INSERVIBLES, HOG) so justifiably noteworthy. The sound itself is as unique as the tracks (and the tracks are more than powerful enough to stand on their own), and their ability to do things like drop a mosh into a brooding punk number ("Estado de Excepcion") is what sets them apart. These records won't be around for long, and I do not suggest snoozing…sometimes the hype is justified. (WN)
(Cabeza de Vaca / Cintas Pepe / SPHC)

THE MUGWUMPS – "Can't Be the One" CD
The third full-length from these Austrian pop punkers. Twelve tracks clocking in at thirty minutes. They pretty much sound like a dead-ringer for the QUEERS / SCREECHING WEASEL. As the wife remarked to me the other day (while hearing this on the boom box), it's incredible the pervasive and enduring influence that the RAMONES have had on rock music. This trio is still carrying the torch, for sure. And by now, I'm guessing you either like this stuff, or you don't. I do. (RK)
(Monster Zero)

NADZOR – "Your Tolerance Is Shit If You Don't Try To Understand Us!!" LP
I've come to count on Pasażer to fill in all the holes in my Polish punk knowledge. They deliver again with another fine document of raw and blistering Polish hardcore thrash, this time from Auschwitz. As well as fitting into the "shit-fi" category sonically, NADZOR's sound on this '88-'89 demo can be described as a mix of SHITLICKERS, MOSKWA, and a touch of crossover. Much of it is *fucking fast*. We had our very own noize aficionado Andrew Underwood sample this through the headphones for a few seconds and immediately got an enthusiastic "fuuuuck yeahh!" This label is no slouch on the packaging, so you'll get a big booklet with lyrics, photos, and English translations. (MA)
(Pasażer)

NAKAM – LP
Named after some badass Jews that used to assassinate Nazi war criminals, this German band is *really pissed*. Just read the lyrics to the song "Pieces" about cutting you, the listener, into bloody, bite-sized morsels. It's hardcore with some really self-indulgent guitar stroke-offs that work on songs like "Plan A" but not on the shit-ass instro-outro to the record, for instance. It's mostly typical modern hardcore with a Happy Tom or Pig Champion protégé on guitar, but the anger and emotion propel it to a much higher level and make it a worthwhile listen. (RO)
(Spastic Fantastic)

NARCOLEPTICS – "Obstruction" EP
NARCOLEPTICS have brought out some serious rippers on their second 7", anchored by one of the most solid drummers in the game today. Somewhere between the noize blitz of bands like CØNDITIØN and KRÖMOSOM and the gut-punch hardcore of fellow New Yorkers AJAX, this is blown-out D-beat hardcore with tight riffs and a nice dose of speed. The vocals are just the kind of mangled, ugly snarl you've always hoped for, with some well-dialed reverb to give it that extra dose of raw chaos. A powerful entry among the current wave of bands filtering Scandinavian and Japanese sounds through an American hardcore lens, this is the good shit, plain and simple. (WB)
(Warthog Speak)

NERVOUS TALK – LP
Well-executed power pop from Canada. You wouldn't necessarily call them retro, although slower numbers definitely lean more to a more traditional '70s sound. In their better moments ("Already Gone," "Flush My Phone" to give two examples) they approach the contagious drive and cheap beer ennui of the MARKED MEN or RADIOACTIVITY. No small praise. On the strength of the best tracks on here I've got a feeling this album could be a grower. (AM)
(Hosehead)

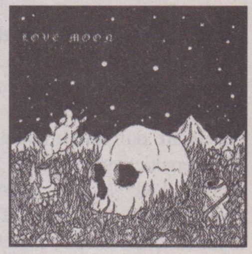
NEON BONE – "Sick of Me" CD
A four-song EP from this pop punk band from GERMANY. These guys remind me of the QUEERS with their slightly snotty vocals over very pop melodies, including the obligatory BEACH BOYS-type slow-tempo number. I can't say these guys stood out on first listen but they are relatively new so I'll wait and see where they go from here. (RL)
(Monster Zero)

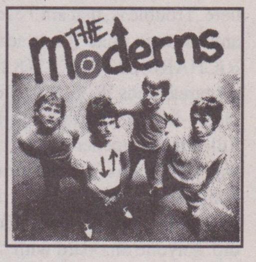
NEWTOWN NEUROTICS – "Triumph Over Adversity" CD
This is really a classy summation of everything that was fantastic about the UK's NEWTOWN NEUROTICS (even if they were actually called the NEUROTICS at this point). From their early RAMONES-inspired speed to their later, more melodic efforts, they always combined sharp political commentary and deft wit with a leftist activist social conscience and a superb line in harmony. Perhaps best exemplified by their wonderful tradition of "adapting" (folk-style) songs to their own ends, as showcased here by stunning renditions of "Stand By Me," "Take Strike Action" (i.e. "Shake Some Action" by the FLAMIN' GROOVIES) and "Living With Unemployment" (i.e. "Solitary Confinement" by the MEMBERS). Fourteen tracks of sweat, tears and inspiration. Recorded at the height of their prowess, in 1987, and a year before they split up. Sheer genius. (RK)
(Violated)

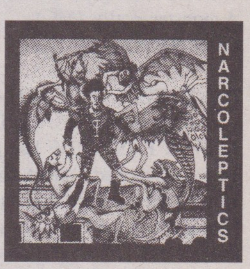
NO BAILS – "Bombs Away" EP
These guys are putting out topical, thudding punk rock. They've got some loud group choruses, utilize a ton of mid '90s garage punk techniques, and produce a record that instantly evokes buying underwear at strip malls, sitting in traffic next to a Toyota Rav 4 full of frat boys, and watching hamburger puke dry outside a laundromat. This EP fails to rise above these evocations. Shruggable. (RW)
(Independent Fries)

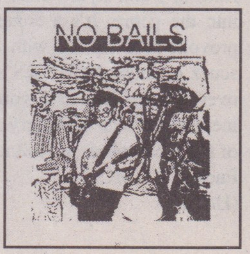
THE NUKES – "Give Up" EP
The NUKES are obnoxious and snotty post-millennium proto-hardcore reminiscent of early CAREER SUICIDE or FORMALEHYDE JUNKIES, though less self-consciously retro. Possibly due to at least 40% of the band being straightedge, I also hear just a tad of early '80s NYHC, specifically the MOB. If anyone remembers the Clean Tone Revolution of 2005, this is what all those wieners wished they could've sounded like. "Stuck" is a dynamic, frustrated creeper that shows that they can pull shit off even several notches slower. I love this kind of stuff, and wish there were more bands like this, but the vocals are just a little too nasally for me, and I think the drums are a little too boomy and busy at times for this style. Overall though, this is great. (DG)
(Man In Decline)

ONMACHT – "The Long Breath" EP
A dissonant, grimy little masterpiece of fuzzed-out UK anarcho-crust—bleak anthems of frustration and disgust with the blighted facade of modern life. Brighton's ONMACHT (Dutch for "Impotence") really nails the classic first-wave crust atmosphere, giving the recordings a dark, cavernous feel that accents the ominous sense of impending doom. The B-Side takes things in an even more martial direction, slowing down to a crawl before bouncing back into the stompy chorus call of "Victorian Winter." Those drawn to the tense, driving metal-punk of current heavies like INSTINCT OF SURVIVAL and SWORDWIELDER will find plenty to sink their rotten teeth into, with just a hint of that early KILLING JOKE magick thrown in for good measure. (WB)
(Argh.Fuck.Kill / Darcy Trash / Opiate / Tadpole / Toztizok Zoundz)









ORATIONS – "Incantations" EP

Feeling lost in time, space, or an endless sea of emotions? ORATIONS are from Buffalo, NY, and have set their sad little time machine for the UK in the mid '80s. Think the CURE and, much moreso, ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN. It's very poppy and up-tempo with plenty of flanger, save for the one SIOUXSIE-style number on the B-side. This record will surely satisfy fans of any of the previously mentioned bands if they're looking for group doing this stuff well now. (LP)
(Sheets of Tens)

PAMPERS – "Right Tonight" EP

PAMPERS? Sounds like a lawsuit waiting to happen. The guitar really makes this record decent. Equal parts jagged, fuzzy and dreamy at times. The vocals are dull and a non-entity here but the songs are energetic with a robotic beat like the SPITS with JESUS AND MARY CHAIN swirling noise and HAWKWIND tape loops. If the vocals were more of a punch to the face to match the music, it would be much better. (RO)
(In The Red)

RICHARD PAPIERCUTS – "IF" LP

PAPIERCUTS and Co. are spearheaded by a big-brained gent you (don't) recognize from the shrouded CHINESE RESTAURANTS and occasional collaborations with BILLY BAO honcho Mattin. Well and good, but no matter, as any framework I attempt to paint is meaningless here. *"IF"* is an anomaly not only in these pages, but in the larger scope of DIY rock'n'roll. Rarely are there visions this unique in any corner of the punk underground, and to force the case for *"IF"* as *Maximum Rocknroll*-worthy material, I must cite post-punk as the most easily grasped straw here. Trouble is, that ain't even the half of it. Perversity and courage duke it out across all the tunes here, as RICHARD PAPIERCUTS forces a collision between disparate ends: Big-'80s affected romanticism versus pierce-riffing and driving, aggressive rhythms. The full-tumble opener notwithstanding, I'll cite "Bull and Cup Relax" as the prime mover on *"IF"*, and while the levels of absurdity, deviance and sheer rockitude may spin throughout the album, they never dip. Anyone on board with *"IF"* will want to seek out the promo 12" (not even joking!) containing remixes courtesy of the great OBNOX and NOBLE SAVAGE. A monster, really. (MC)
(Ever/Never)

DAVID PEEL & DEATH – "King of Punk" LP

Along with the FUGS, DAVID PEEL AND THE LOWER EAST SIDE had a big hand in paving the way for stoned, street-urchin shitheads to form bands, fart through guitars and start spit-screamin' at audiences (and / or cops). Having helped lay the groundwork, PEEL obviously felt connected to punk during the late-'70s heyday, collaborating with GG ALLIN, WAYNE KRAMER and other goons, but *King of Punk* is his most storied and formal foray into the genre. It's a completely ace update of his provoke-folk shtick, with all the aural sleaze and scuzz of those JABBERS singles that we all cream over. *King of Punk* is a would-be classic of gross-out inept punk rock assholery, available again courtesy of the great minds at HoZac. Punks is hippies, right? Fuckin' A! (MC)
(HoZac)

PISS – "Pubertala Uppror" EP

Filthy, feedback-drenched hardcore from Berlin. The noize and reverb on the vocals hint at a Japanese influence, but the bones of this are straightforward basic hardcore, driven by the screamed vocals and raw guitar riffs. The mid-tempo track is a bit of a snoozer; the short fast ones kill. Extra credit for the excellent fold-out sleeve that features some great silkscreened art. (AU)
(Static Age)

PMS 84 – "Creep" EP

The last couple years has seen a rise in PARTISANS / ENEMY / UK82-style punk, with varying degrees of success. For my money, Portland's PMS 84 is at the top of the heap and this EP shows us just why. The added aggression and nastiness here is usually neglected with the style, and it MOTÖR-izes PMS 84 into a frenzied cracking. Put your boots on, get 'em good 'n' dirty, get hurt, get loud, and break some shit. (JU)
(Nightrider)

THE PONCHES – "Hum" CD

A pop punk band from ITALY that has been around for ten or so years here. Definitely from the school of RAMONES worship, these guys play up-tempo catchy stuff that reminds me of the BRIEFS or a slicker SCREECHING WEASEL, while some songs even remind me of the '80s SMITHEREENS. Good vocals that shy away from snotty singing without getting sugary sweet. I've never heard these guys but they are pretty good for this done-to-death genre. (RL)
(Monster Zero / One Chord Wonder)

PRODUKT – "Słabości" LP

Time-travelers from 2001. Grimy, millennium-crust-worship punk rock from Poland. Pounding drums, dual guitars and, from what I can decipher through the translation provided, lyrics about fascism, nationalism and classism. If you like music like this you will most likely get hella stoked. (AP)
(Mass Deadening)

RADIO HEARTS – "Lot to Learn" EP

So here's the deal, the music is super catchy and melodic, but the production makes it sound like you're listening to it from another room. Does that make sense? It sounds sort of muted. It's too bad, because the music is really put together well. There's guitar and bass and drums, all of it. It's just not dynamic. (KK)
(No Front Teeth)

RADON / SHALLOW CUTS – split EP

The first few seconds of the RADON side kinda bummed me out. I felt like I was watching one of Florida's best ever bands grow old and boring right in front of my face. It becomes apparent pretty quickly, though, that this is not the case. The years have slowed this legendary behemoth down, but it's still RADON, it's still just as catchy as ever, and Dave's odd vocal delivery is just as spot on as always. It didn't drive me completely apeshit like the self-titled EP did when I was a kid, but this is good! SHALLOW CUTS play some heartfelt dude rock, and they do it well. If you love most things Dude, but hate that shitty attitude, these dudes are your jam, and they are going to hug the shit outta you. (DZ)
(No Idea)

RICCOBELLIS – "We Are on a Mission" CD

An Italian QUEERS / RIVERDALES tribute act! They have a song called "I Hate Posers" with insane "Boomshakalaka" backing vocals, two songs about different members of the RAMONES (Tommy and Dee Dee), one about a girl who doesn't like *Scarface*, another about a girl on LSD. I love the RAMONES but don't want to hear any of the pop punk simulations that have been rife in punk for the last few decades. This band reinforces this fact. What made the RAMONES great is not apparent in any of the wannabes. (LG)
(Monster Zero)

R.U.T.A. – "Gore" LP

Say the words "folk punk" in certain circles and you're liable to find yourself friendless pretty quickly, so I'm going to try to do this one justice without pegging it into that shitty category. Here we have a Polish punk band singing Polish folk songs from the 1800s to nearly modern times. There aren't any guitars, but the street-punk-style backup vocals and abrasive, gruff (although acoustic) instrumentation more than make up for that fact. This "folk orchestra" reminds me more of that TOM CORA / the EX mashup, with hints of TODOS TUS MUERTOS' *Dale Aborigen* LP, and with a beautiful fucking booklet to boot. Any fan of screaming acoustic dickheads should find this immediately and never look back. It's fucking great! (DZ)
(Pasażer)

SANG – "Món Oblidat" EP

Holy shit, this is so sick! Insane possessed vocalist makes the record an essential one for maniac minded punkers; we are talkin' FIRMEZA 10 levels of essentiality! I do not think I would be as consumed by this if not for her insane SACRILIGE meets Linda Blair vocal stylings. Musically this is a brutal rampage of pummel that falls somewhere between UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE and the aforementioned FIRMEZA 10. The first song is truly devastating, a real pit opener, with some wild guitar ravage that descends into a heavy breakdown riff that would make the most delicate stomp heads... The only song I am not that keen on is the one on the B-Side with a small section of dueling male/female vocals, which for some reason just didn't work for these ears, but the rest of the record is non-stop sickness. Total relentless cellular chaos with lyrics in Catalan from a band based in Italy. Get it or regret it. (LG)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

SCALPED – "Progress" EP

This record is definitely tougher and crunchier than the last, with a lot of specifically '90s metallic NYHC elements in many of the breakdowns and gang vocals, though the long and frenzied approach to verse riff-writing from the first EP remains at other times. Zach's breathing fire vocals are a little clearer and often a little off the music, which makes for a cool dynamic. From the sample of '90s SF rapper SAN QUINN to the last note, the record also flows well. (DG)
(Video Disease)

TY SEGALL – "Ty Rex" LP

It is pretty inspired for TY SEGALL to cover T. REX. For the name alone, he had to do it. Plus Marc Bolan's songs lend themselves so easily to SEGALL's brand of fuzzy garage rock. And face it,

both are musical heartthrobs of their respective decades. This LP collects all eight songs from the *Ty Rex* 7" and 12" and adds one new one, "20th Century Boy." I hate rebuying for just one song, but this record is so good it doesn't really bother me too much. (CK)
(Goner)

SEI TO SHI – "Vida y Muerte" EP
This is a tight EP from a short-lived New York band, who are set to reunite soon. Four tracks of fuzzy, ADK-style punk with vocals in Japanese, and buzzing guitar that offers up hits of melody amidst the chaos à la TYPHUS, though the galloping drums suggest a hit of UK'82 influence as well. Compared to the endless sea of wannabe crasher crust clones, the straightforward punk approach of SEI TÖ SHI is quite refreshing. (AU)
(Nightrider)

SELF DEFENSE FAMILY – "When the Barn Caves In" EP
These are two new songs that sound like they were done at the same time as the band's new LP. Over the years, SELF DEFENSE FAMILY has changed from feeling like Revolution Summer (yeah, very much EMBRACE) to a more LUNGFISH-style groove. The A-side is a whole lot like WILDERNESS with a simple, repetitive guitar melody over a laid back, flowing rhythm section and topped with gruff, spoken vocals. The whole thing relies heavily on subtle dynamic changes that the band pulls off well, and while I feel like I've heard to this song before, that doesn't stop it from being a pretty good listen. While the B-side is similar, it's a little heavier and doesn't grab you as much—but that might be influenced by the fact that that first song was so good. (PA)
(Iron Pier)

SEXBOMBA – "Abstrahuj" CD
As one might notice from the record title, these plucky Poles have the good sense to sing in their native tongue. Always preferable (and much better sounding to these ears). It does mean, of course, I haven't got a clue what they're singing about. Musically, they gleefully reconstruct that late-'70s Brit punk rock sound, à la VIBRATORS, UK SUBS, RUTS, EATER et al., and do it with gusto and aplomb! Maximum rock'n'roll indeed. (RK)
(Lou Rocked Boys)

SEX TIDE – "Vernacular Splatter" 12"
Brazenly dark punk that had me checking the spine to ensure I wasn't listening to some abandoned LOST SOUNDS excavation. I say that recalling those Black Wavers' earliest, bleakest Big Neck Records era rather than their more celebrated synth obliterations, but the vibe is most certainly there. It's gloom married with anger, completely free of moping and delivered in with a fairly primitive, noisy bite. I can't get enough and I'll be buying my own copy before I leave *MRR*-HQ this evening. (MC)
(Superdreamer)

SHELLSHAG – "Why'd I Have To Get So High?" LP
It's hard to figure out what's weirder: the fact that SHELLSHAG made a bedroom rock record, or the fact that it might be their best record yet. In the past SHELLSHAG has relied on high-energy songs to grab a hold of their audiences and then whip them into a frenzy through the use of easily recognizable cover songs and extremely dance-able numbers. This record has none of that. It's very low energy, hard to dance to, and there are no covers (that I can recognize, at least). But this record is good, really good. There's an extensive list of musicians who make guest appearances on this record, so rarely do you have a song featuring the band as a two-piece. While it's still obviously Shell and Jen playing these songs, I'd almost say this record bears a stronger resemblance to mid '90s FLAMING LIPS than it does mid '00s KUNG FU USA. This album feels rich in scope and vision, possibly due to all of the musicians joining the band. It flows together brilliantly. This is a genuinely impressive record, highly recommended. (FS)
(Don Giovanni / Starcleaner)

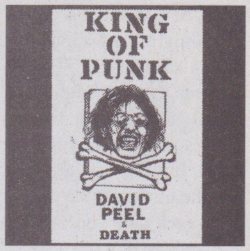
SILENT NOISE – "I've Been Hurt / Heart to Heart"
This is only punk because back when this was recorded in 1979, most pop music completely sucked. So, if a band made a good pop record, only the punks would listen to it. It's poppy (duh!) and super catchy and super sweet. Remember the FRESHIES' "I'm in Love With the Girl on the Manchester Virgin Megastore Checkout Desk"? This might remind you of that. If you don't know that one either, you need to find it. That's what the interwebs are for. (KK)
(Breakout)

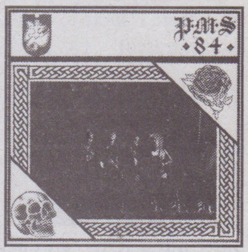
SIN MOTIVO – "Laberintos / Tierra del Deseo"
It says a lot when a five-minute hardcore song can hold my attention the whole way through, and "Laberintos" does it. It cycles through various irate riffs at slightly different but all fast speeds as the singer yells over and the second guitar plays rock licks; abruptly shifting into a mid-paced jamout most of the way in and cycling through a few more stream-of-consciousness riffs at the same speed, it ends with drumming over what sounds like someone trying to start a chainsaw. "Tierra del Deseo" starts with the drums fading back in over some sort of noise, and rides on some dirgy riffs before launching into a fast half-minute and then slowing to a stop. The recording and vocals are nice and blown-out and, despite the guitar being relatively treble-y, it all sounds muddy in a way that contrasts with the abrasion in a cool manner. Another hit from Not Normal. (DG)
(Not Normal)

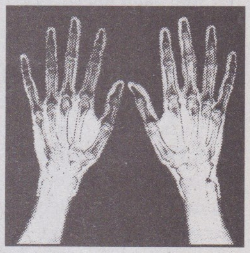
SIN ORDEN – "Ha Llegado el Momento" EP
This shit is bonkers! If you are a person who enjoys hardcore punk you probably already know SIN ORDEN rip, as they've been one of the top Chicago bands for well over a decade. Some of their previous releases have sounded a bit thin, but not this time! Full-on thrashing Latino hardcore fury. Toss all your punk templates into the trash and feel the true cathartic rage that is SIN ORDEN. (MA)
(Not Normal)

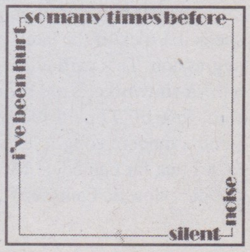
SNOB – "Quit Your Job" EP
SNOB's last 7" was one of the sicker records of 2014, suggestive of the visionary new guard of London punk, building hope for at least one community standing in the face of an oppressive future. They're back with this EP, which on the A-side narrows its scope in on the day-to-day psychological warfare of the emerging service economy. The production here is more furious than before; "Litter Lout" is a good sample if you want to hear their pendulum swing between maniacal PENI riffs and insane pogo interludes. The bass sounds particularly deranged on the whole recording. The vocals themselves are a bit closer, less drowned out in reverb than they were last time around. This makes songs like "Quit Your Job" hit closer to home, detailing all the unpaid labor that goes into an average day of work and in the middle dropping some brutally real lines: "Despite it all / You still want a pat on the back." The B-side has a more absurdist take, coloring a landscape populated by unchecked dogs and their careless guardians. Look to London, New York, Buenos Aires, San Francisco: the future is an emerald city covered in dog shit. (EW)
(self-released)

SOUPCANS – "Soft Party" LP
What kind of soft-ass party has hard fuckin' riffs darting at you from all directions, needling your temples and causing muscles to contract? I guess a Canadian one. Anyway, here's a collection of angry moments, worries and vibes rather than songs, though all that you hear is punk capable of causing convulsion. For panic rockers only? Hey, that's not a bad thing. (MC)
(Telephone Explosion)









THE SPEWMEN – "War" CD

Straightforward punk with thick guitars and more than a casual LES THUGS feel, though slower (and I swear that I thought that before I read the promo sheet), this French band makes shockingly simple punk sound incredibly appealing. Nothing new here at all, but the riffs are good, the hooks are plentiful and the tracks are very strong—if you like mid-tempo punk rock then you've found your band. (WN)
(self-released)

STUN EVENT – "Civil Surveillance" EP

I should just be able to say that STUN EVENT is an Evicci-backed ex-OUT COLD project, and that should be all that you need. I'll also let you know that this is no rules hardcore with truly unique sounding vocals perhaps more suited for "bigger" sounding heavy bands, but it's the vocals that add so much originality to this new outfit. It's hardcore, sure, so you can understand it…but STUN EVENT is definitely adding something to the mix. The guitars have more personality, vocals have more attitude, and the tracks certainly do not care about your rules ("Commercial Home Invasion," I'm looking at you). This was apparently recorded in 2012, but I certainly hope there is more to come. (WN)
(self-released)

SUBTRACTIONS – "It's Exposed" EP

Dang, the reissue world goes straight rural this month with a brand spankin' new archival release of 1980 punk recordings from the shitfields of Fresno. The brief liner notes make it sound like these SUBTRACTIONS really laid the groundwork for a slew of local bands you've never heard of back in '79 and '80 which is all fine and dandy but fuck, this EP is sick! It's pretty rare to hear the real rough stuff, especially for 1980, and from the sounds of it, they managed to snag the best singles from the beach scenes and Dangerhouse catalog and brought 'em back to Fresno for deep reading. The first real California punk discovery I can think of since I heard the CONSUMERS LP way back when, right up there with the CHIEFS, GEARS and AUTHORITIES EPs. Wish I had more than four songs to go on but there's no doubt that if these tracks had come out back in the day, they'd blow most of the competition on *Bloodstains Across California* out of the water. Highly recommended if you like punk music. (GB)
(HoZac)

SUNPOWER – "Last Rights" EP

SUNPOWER just celebrated their thirteenth anniversary and time seems to have been kind to them. Their newest record exhibits enough variations to keep even a garage-hardcore dilettante like myself entertained. These Belgians play less on the trashy side of things, opting for a tighter sound with a rock'n'roll swagger. They still know how to play a fast number, and close out the record with one. The real joy, though, is the first track on the A-side, "Another Rage," a stomping, exuberant number that sheds the rock of the later tracks for a more formless aggression. This particular track reminds me more of a *MRR* shitworker's old band AIRFIX KITS, with the same love of '77 punk bleeding through an attempt to write a modern song. That's the track, but the others aren't that far behind. (LP)
(Oddie / Spastic Fantastic)

TAPED FIST – "Grounded" CD

Bearded Southern gentlemen with a love of wrestling playing punk rock. While this formula has worked well in the case of bands like MAD BROTHER WARD AND THE SCREAMING STREET TRASH, it's not the case here. You got the buzzsaw guitar and shouted gruff vocals but this is just too dumb. There are so many great lines to plagiarize from wrestling that there's no excuse for songs like "Bite My Dick Disco Boy." Just fucking tired. This shit wears me out. (RO)
(Mystery School)

TENTACLES – "Ambivalence" LP

Blending strains of black metal, screamo, grindcore and post-rock into their triumphalist neo-crust fusion, TENTACLES might just might be the most Euro-sounding band to ever come out of Texas. Fierce and unrelenting, the pure speed of the record masks just how much is going on here, a staggering depth of focus that allows seamless shifts from soaring builds to lurching blast-beat pummel. The thin, melodic guitar leads show an obvious affinity with the swirling grind of CLOUD RAT, but in terms of songwriting this has a lot more in common with the new wave of crusty dark hardcore bands like LENTIC WATERS and HEXIS. Existentially embattled lyrics reflect a ton of philosophical and poetic depth, but it'll take a certain kind of punk to appreciate lines like "Verily, my darkly glowering to be splayed across the ethers." (WB)
(Dead Tank / Deadwood / IFB / React With Protest / Dead Tank / Zegema Beach)

THE THINGZ – "Troubles Begin" LP

Kitschy pop punk from Long Beach, CA. The songs go for a spooky theme, but the music is so upbeat and boppy there is little scare factor. It sounds nice and I can imagine listening to them on a SoCal beach, the breeze slightly blowing and an ice cold one in hand. (CK)
(Coffee Addict)

THISCLOSE – "Chapter III" LP

After four years as a band, a US tour and an incredibly prolific release schedule, it's past time for the punx to accept that THISCLOSE are not a novelty band and they're definitely not going anywhere. Without a doubt this is their finest work yet, an absolutely razor-sharp blend of early DISCHARGE's heavy riffing and frantic solos and later DISCHARGE's rock influence and glam vocals. True to form, a few classic DISCHARGE riffs appear in gently reworked arrangements, but that's always been part of the charm. Every tune on this record hits, from the "State Violence/State Control" riffing on "You're Not Alone" to the *Massacre Divine*-inspired swagger of "Shine on Through (For all the Kids)" to the epic album-closing "Who Declares It?". If ever you doubted the power of THISCLOSE, know now that the time for doubting is over. Fucking brilliant. (AU)
(SPHC)

TRAFFIC DEATH – "Terror on the Freeway" EP

Crossover thrash with sinister, rasping snarls and '90s PV backing growls. Guitar work is stellar: speed-picking galore and shredding leads when appropriate (I'm talking "Thirst" here, kids…short and sweet, and the bass solo is deadly). Killer party thrash with a GIRLSCHOOL cover to help drive the mood home. (WN)
(Give Praise)

TRAMPOLINE TEAM – "Make It Faster" LP

Why couldn't I find bands like this when I lived in New Orleans?! TRAMPOLINE TEAM subscribes to the melodic punk camp of "write the fucking hook, sing the goddamn chorus, freak out on the guitar and get the fuck out." The songs are simple and kind of dumb as shit, but their drummer plays sixteenth notes like a maniac, so I'm still hooked on the line. They keep things driving in the same vein as JAY REATARD, the SPITS and MARKED MEN, but never as phenomenal. (But who is? That's a tall order.) The singer has an inflection that might induce '90s pop punk flashbacks in some older punks, but you'll get over it pretty quickly. A solid record throughout. (GH)
(Pelican Pow Wow)

TV FREAKS – "Bad Luck Charms" LP

People will talk about wanting to see a band live if they're not too excited about the record they're reviewing: to be more specific, this is a band I'd be interested in seeing play at a bar, rather than at a house show. A lot of this record is good, don't get me wrong, but something about it demands mood lighting. It could be a little looser, but not too loose; a lot of it depends on attaining some kind of balance between its instrumental elements. Due to some intense compression, our singer sounds like he is in a studio a few rooms over. Maybe that is the best way to navigate between a rocker's howl and the more melodic parts here (which remind me of the FLESHIES or something). For a song like "Pick My Brain," it's great, skewed riffs and rhythms charging ahead in less than one minute. The drummer on this record will change up his pattern under a repeating guitar line, which to some extent can resuscitate a longer and more repetitive song. There are still some points where you might want to reach for that drink. (EW)
(Deranged)

ULICZNY OPRYSZEK – "Na Zawsze Punk" LP

This LP has a pretty unique premise: ULICZNY OPRYSZEK covers a selection of "classic" Polish punk songs from 1978 to 1993 that never had a proper studio recording. I'm a pretty big Polish punk enthusiast, but POST REGIMENT and ZAKON ZEBRZACYCH are the only bands of the nineteen on here that I've even heard of. One of the guys in this band is apparently a serious archivist, so each track is kicks off with a short intro snippet from live recordings of the original song. Furthermore, the liner notes contain English lyric translations and historical contexts for each song, explaining the importance for its inclusion. The songs all sound pretty cool, but I can't help being more interested in hearing the raw original versions! I guess that's the next part of my journey, thanks to ULICZNY OPRYSZEK and the internet. It also includes a DVD, which I'm unable to watch at this time. All in all it's quite a wealth of information for seekers of obscure but influential Polish punk. (MA)
(Pasażer)

USELESS EATERS – "Live at Vacation" LP

This is my first time stepping into Castle Face's live series—there's an "I've been here before" sense I get looking at these records, as well-laid out as they are and as promising as they seem. I've been to this ballroom or basement before, I've beheld some punishing conversation with someone on the back

cover. Plus, how good could it sound? Well, it actually sounds pretty tight with this particular USELESS EATERS set. The recording quality is great, just as good as most studio recordings coming in here. Their current lineup, which you can hear swaying between breezy synth-centered tracks and tightly wound punk on studio recordings, transforms into something that could have made the cut on one of the *Where Birdmen Flew* comps. It's great! Plus, I don't even have to push my way to the front of the crowd or get my glasses fogged up with other people's condensed coke sweat. This series serves a valuable function, I guess: not to induce F.O.M.O. or conjure up some kind of imagined dream-gig, but rather to rescue the salvageable pieces of music from the sea of shit under which San Francisco is buried. Recommended. (EW)
(Castle Face)

UTAH JAZZ – "Ivory Wave" LP
I know that punk isn't the world where people are often praised for their genius lyrics. We love bands that allow us to get drunk and scream along to lines like "I can't see too well. What's it all about? / I don't know, man, did you poke your eyes out?" Sometimes though, lyrics are just a little cringe-inducing and that's how I felt while listening to UTAH JAZZ. Maybe I'm looking into it too much, but most of the lines are just nonsense and are probably meant to be taken lightly. The music is bouncy, jangly, poppy, light, goofy punk that is harmless and floppy. Nothing on the record really had the hooks or distinction to hold my interest, but I'm not the biggest fan of fluff. Some people like to eat marshmallow fluff straight out of the jar, though. You decide where you stand. (GH)
(Black Dot)

VANITY OF THE TONGUE – "Reality Fantasies" LP
There are a couple parts in the second song where the music cuts out and the groove looks uncut, like it's a pressing error. This record doesn't look like a test press. Was someone inebriated when they approved it? Probably not. So it's gotta be art, right? Maybe a call and response? Anyway, I would have liked to hear the *full* song but I guess you can't have everything you want (maybe they're trying to teach me a lesson). Anyway, around the compound they used to call this stuff MGHC (Mysterious Guy Hardcore was a term coined by our own Brace Belden) but I never liked that because it turned in to a pejorative term. People wouldn't call DIE KREUZEN or BL'AST! that, but those bands definitely share a common thread with the CULT RITUALs of the world. Anyway, VANITY OF THE TONGUE definitely reminds me of the latter, as well as possessing a JESUS LIZARD kinda vibe. For fans of: power electronics, black metal, going to your parents' for the holidays. (MW)
(Crisis of Taste)

SONNY VINCENT – "Bizarro Hymns" CD
Yes, SONNY VINCENT of TESTORS fame is still at it, and if you like bar rock punk from the 1970s, you'll be pretty happy with this one. Although the decades have been quite kind to SONNY and his rock, it's not what I'm super stoked on. There are more than several total rippers on here, though, and oddly enough, the mellower, sappy songs are pretty fucking great. (DZ)
(Get Hip)

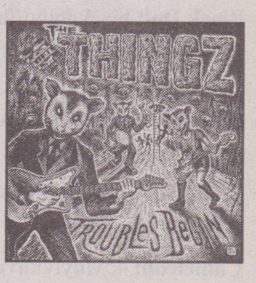
WARFARE – "Revoltinde" EP
This is, in fact, new material by the old Italian punk band that had a split with UPSET NOISE. One side has a long, meandering track with a little too much wah-pedal. The flip is three cuts of fast and fun Italian punk with simple beats and effective vocal hooks. A cool benefit record for a new squat in the pretty coastal Slovenian city, Koper. (MA)
(Unlimited Blah Blah Blah, no info)

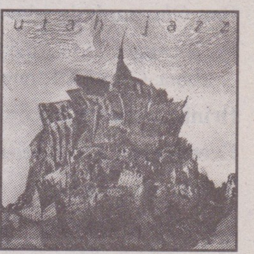
THE WIMMINS INSTITUTE – "Badass Lady Power Picnic" CD
Radical feminist punk/pop in the same league as TENDER TRAP or ALL GIRL SUMMER FUN BAND. The lyrics are in the VOODOO QUEENS / MAMBO TAXI tradition of UK riot grrrl bands with a sense of humor, but the acerbic misandry is put across in a dreamy K Records way as well as a snotty *Girls in the Garage* manner. They describe themselves as pop punk but I think they are more in the tradition of HEAVENLY / DOLLY MIXTURE; not in the same league as those groups by any stretch, but part of that particular British lineage of cool girl pop with a punk ideal. The WIMMINS INSTITUTE features two women from OG UK riot grrrl band LINUS as well as two women from Marxist agit-poppers THEE FACTION. There are love songs to bicycles, kiss-off songs to loser boys, songs about oppressive male behavior, the cruelties of friendship, the joys of mansplaining, and dictatorial mums, they are all written with a sense of humor and joy. Being angry, goofy, pedantic, soulful and ridiculous all at once! Coming together in the face of the patriarchy and making something fun for your friends out of your rage and inside jokes… (LG)
(self-released)

WOLFMANHATTAN PROJECT – "Smells Like You/You Are My Glue"
A new supergroup featuring former members of the GORIES, the GUN CLUB and PUSSY GALORE!? Yup, Bob Bert, Mick Collins and Kid Congo Powers formed a band. It's not as mind-blowing as you would hope but what supergroup lives up to the possibilities of their members? It's a trap! This on the other hand is a sick little stomper, no bass needed, just wild drums with nasty '60s mailorder guitar and Mick Collins wailing about "Bodega Love." The flipside is a swampier affair with cool SCREAMING JAY HAWKINS back-up crooner vocals, while KID CONGO intones a wild supernatural narrative that is somewhere between "Who Do You Love," "Salty Dog" and a surreal sci-fi dime store collection…This looks really cool (Bob Bert as a child star drummer in a '60s rec room on the cover!) and it sounds really cool (as hopefully depicted in this review) and if you are in line with these gentlemen's previous efforts I am sure you will find some kicks in listening to their new sounds. (LG)
(In the Red)

ZEX – "Fear No Man / I Didn't Know"
This band doesn't mess about. This single is a game of two halves: "Fear No Man" is a metallic punk onslaught, like SOFAHEAD covering MOTÖRHEAD. The flip is a toe-tapping '77 punk pop number. Both sides are killer. The vocals invite comparison to VICE SQUAD, which works for me. I'll have "I Didn't Know" in my head all night. (AM)
(Loud Punk)

V/A – "Tardis Records Compilation" LP
Put the rather uninspiring name aside and look past (or enjoy, as appropriate) the gaudy day-glo cover and you'll find a pretty solid compilation here. Like a lot of the best comps, there are multiple songs by most of the bands. There are a couple of duds in the mix, like BAD SAM's melodramatic pop punk and a fairly forgettable effort from ENDLESS GRINNING SKULLS, but the majority of the material is great, from the joyfully juvenile punk of the NOBBERS and FUK, to the fuzzy garage of the SLOWMOTIONS (these tracks are much better than their last single), and raging hardcore from WARHEAD and BLAZING EYE, who share top marks as the standout bands. (AU)
(Tardis)





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Counteract: counteractrecords.org
Crisis of Taste: tasteofcrisis.blogspot.com
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Dead Tank: www.deadtankrecords.com
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Desolate: desolaterecords.bandcamp.com
Disiplin Media: disiplin-media.com
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Give Praise: PO Box 494, Barnstable, MA 02630-0494; givepraiserecords.com
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La Humanidad Es La Plaga: musikaze.com/lahumanidadeslaplaga
Left Hand Path: facebook.com/LHPRecords
Long Legs Long Arms: lonlegslongarms.jp
Lou Rocked Boys: sexbomba.band.pl
Loud Punk: PO Box 6115, Albany NY 12203, loudpunk.blogspot.com
Lou & Rocked Boys: ul. Wilcza 27, 50-429 Wrocław, Poland. Produkcja@rockers.pl
Man In Decline: manindeclinerecords.com
Maniac Attack: maniac-attack.de
Marsten House: marstenhouserecording.tumblr.com
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Monster Zero: monsterzero.nl
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Warthog Speak: 2109 23rd Street, San Francisco, CA 94108; warthogspeak.com
Wimmin's Institute: wimmins.wordpress.com
ZAS-Autoproduzioni: zasrec.blogspot.it
Zegema Beach: zegemabeachrecords.com

DEMOS

Send cassettes and CD-Rs to: MRR Attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. CD-Rs with no artwork will not be considered. Reviews by Matt Badenhop, Robert Collins, Michael de Toffoli, Greg Harvester, Mike Leslie, and Sean Nieves-Quiñones.

ANAL BUTT – *Also Pays Tribute to The Smiths* –You'd be hard pressed to find a track longer than seven seconds on this seventy-five-song tape. Most of them aren't longer than two. Noise, tape manipulation, blast beats and a guttural, vomiting singer spew their fucking load out for just over ten minutes…just for you. Brutal…also, "brutal." Members of LOTUS FUCKER and LEGLESS. (Greg) (75-song cassette, lyrics not included, SPHCrecords.bandcamp.com)

AUTARKY / MOLEDEBATER – *split* – Two-piece rambunctious punkers MOLEDEBATER trade fidelity for enthusiasm with songs that remind me of late '90s SF…plenty of sing-alongs, sounds like shit, with a tendency to break into a galloping hardcore number with no notice. AUTARKY is a (slightly) cleaner one-man version of the same animal. Straightforward and stripped down punk interrupted occasionally by the kind of studio weirdness that happens when you don't have bandmates to tell you "no." (Robert) (15-song CD-R, lyrics included, moledebater.bandcamp.com, autarky.bandcamp.com)

BIB – This a very distorted and effects-heavy recording. You got your heavy guitars, a vocal that's very delayed and higher registered, and something going off spinning in the background. It's dirgy, and there is more than one baby crying. It has a bit of a POISON IDEA feeling to it. The tape artwork is good, grainy framed mace and chain printed in magenta on a heavy cream card stock. BIB hails from Nebraska. (Mike) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, bibhc.bandcamp.com)

BIG CRUX – *We Got A Jam* – Have you heard BIG CRUX? Do you realize how good they are? This cassette is a collection of the *Big Crux is A Big Funk* EP, the split with CRIMINAL CODE, the *Nature Cruising* 12" and their track off of the *Welcome to 2013* LP compilation. They also throw in an incredible live cover of the PLUGZ. The only missing piece of their discography is the excellent LP *Ponchito*, which is still in print. They seem to effortlessly recall the sounds of early '80s east LA punk and the Telecaster-centric funk tone of D. Boon without sounding like a shitty bar band. Every song is so incredibly tight, catchy and excellent. If you don't already own all of this vinyl, I highly recommend throwing your money at them for this tape. (Greg) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, Not Normal Tapes, 1450 N Washtenaw #2, Chicago, IL 60622, notnormaltapes@gmail.com)

BORDER – First of all, there's no name anywhere on the fucking tape. I had to scour the internet just to find the name of the fucking band. Maybe a brilliant marketing scheme to trick people into doing research or maybe someone just fucked up. This is psychy post-punk from London, just drums, bass, vox. Bass is bright and punk and the vocals have a short delay on them which give a sort of stutter with lyrics about how the singer's brain is fucked up and he feels like dying. It's actually totally worth it after the hassle. (Michael) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, defenestratetheborder.bandcamp.com)

BOY TROUBLE / REDHANDS – This split is amazing! The included note says that both bands were recorded live in a basement using the onboard mic on a laptop and I can't believe how well these recordings came out. It gives new hope to DIY lo-fi home recordings, so listen to this, study it, do it! BOY TROUBLE is an indie punk band with a dreamy washed coolness. The raw guitars are confident enough to take a backseat to simplistic indie pop keyboards, alongside calming, lush vocals. Really well structured and creative songwriting. REDHANDS is a weird-punk garage band that has banging hooks and crazy vox. Totally complements the weird calmness of Side A with weird energy on Side B. I had this tape on in the background and it kept grabbing my attention. (Michael) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, soundcloud.com/redhands666)

CRABAPPLE – *Is It You* – I'm wondering why we're just getting this tape from the Bay Area's now-defunct CRABAPPLE, but better late than never, right? They play jangly, heart on the sleeve, sweet indie pop songs that make me think of CUB, HEAVENS TO BETSY and some early K records releases. Most of the songs contain instantly catchy guitar hooks that serve as insatiable earworms. Couple that with saccharine sweet lyrics and you'll get lost in this tape. The first song "East Coast Cities" contained a hook that I immediately remembered from seeing their live show, even though it's been well over a year since I saw them. Now, it's hopelessly stuck in my head. This will happen to you with most of their songs. Beware. The members are also in TRY THE PIE, JOYRIDE and SOURPATCH, which are also good reference points for this band. (Greg) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, crabapplesf.bandcamp.com)

CRAZY BUGS – This band is such a mess in the best way. They tracked down a busted ass four-track in their hometown of Vancouver, BC, and proceeded to bash out some fucking manic P-U-N-K. Their singer is screaming to the point of shredded vocal cords on every single track. It's not so much singing as it is a complete and utter nervous breakdown about being confronted with privilege issues and dreams of male castration. Destructive. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, 2447 E Hastings St, Vancouver, BC V5K 1Y8, CANADA)

CRUDE HUMOR – *Jeri's Grill* – Get the fuck out. This tape is fucked and awesome. I feel like anything I say is not gonna do it justice, but it has the intensity (and speed) of hardcore, the funk-weirdness of the BIG BOYS (but in tiny doses), some sneaky ambient noise parts and a bit of a grunge overtone. It's a mish-mash of all of that, but it doesn't sound disjointed. It *flows*. I'll bet this band destroys the basement show. (Greg) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, notnormaltapes@gmail.com, crudecrudecrude1@gmail.com)

CULT VALUES – Their distinct quality is the glorious, melodic, chorus-drenched guitar. This Berlin band takes short and basic structures and colors them up with interesting guitar lines and syncopated shouts. Sometimes it reminds me of the more melodic SICKOIDS songs, while other times earlier MANIFESTO JUKEBOX stuff. The clown on the cover gives me the heebie jeebies! Yuck! A hot new band and a prime example of what has become a very popular sound of our time. (Matt) (8-song cassette, no lyrics, cultvalues@gmail.com)

DEAD TIRED – Driving, catchy punk with snotty and aggressive female vocals. Ethereal guitars when appropriate, a straight up wall of six string glory when they get to business—it's hard to not at least mention WHITE LUNG. Good tracks even if a little unpolished ("Waste Your Time" as an example), and I feel like they are definitely going to get better. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, deadtired.bandcamp.com)

DILETTANTES – Beer soaked sweaty high-end rock'n'roll. Think PAGANS, think modern garage creamers somewhere between MARKED MEN and TYRADES, think infectious jams and endless parties. Think about not giving a fukk and going for it anyway. Think about a drug baggie filled with glitter. "Late To The Party" is my anthem for the month. (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, nothinbutadilettante.bandcamp.com)

DR. LIGHT – *Demo 2015* – Very '90s inflected alt rock somewhere in the neighborhood of JIMMYEATWORLD and WILD MOTH. Shouted vocals over melodic chord progressions, triumphant solos like SILKWORM, this reminds me of heshers of decades past who shed their long hair but not their roots, holding on in good ol' 20XX. (Sean) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, drlight1.bandcamp.com, 824 Walker St. Port Townsend, WA 98368 USA)

EXHAAUST – A much delayed review of a four-song banger from one of the Bay Area's most powerful new outfits. A heaviness that nods to the way bands recorded fifteen years ago, trying to harness as much power as possible (a welcome effort)…and there is a lot of power to be harnessed here. Crushing slows with lightning fast bursts of power, and everything makes one to want to destroy. Vocals are primitive and filthy, and remove any sense that this is a casual presentation. The noise between tracks is a tasteful addition, as opposed to some bands who fully lean on the extra sounds to make them seem interesting… EXHAAUST doesn't need the help. This one is a powerhouse, kids. (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, exhaaust.bandcamp.com)

FACILITY MEN – Mid-tempo discordant stomp that rides the line between late '80s hardcore and noise rock, like the weirder tracks from DIE KREUZEN and BORN AGAINST. Warped guitar playing that's half animal fisted chords and half cut-up Greg Ginn leads, tying grotesquely together with the bass and drums, reminiscent of the tunes of SKULL KONTROL and MONORCHID. Includes a very generous entreaty from the label imploring the youth to start new bands and mail them demos, and if new bands don't have one, they offer to record one! Punk. (Sean) (5-song

cassette, lyrics included, subject1.bandcamp.com, More Power Tapes, PO Box 467, Buffalo, NY 14226)

FLESH EATING CREEPS – *The Book About The Movie: Complete Recordings 1995-2000* – Really killer collection of tracks from an under the radar Virginia band. The 58-song tape starts with FLESH EATING CREEPS' final recording in 2000, a much more chaotic band than the one I played with in 1996… powerful math-y technical hardcore with stumbling bursts of rage. The tape moves backwards in time, gradually regressing into a barebones teenage US hardcore band with an ear for subtle tongue in cheek digs. Really well put together tape with lyrics and pics and graphics spanning the band's existence. (Robert) (58-song cassette, lyrics included, c/o Handstand Records, PO Box 110398, Brooklyn, NY 11211, handstandrecords.com, flesheatingcreeps.com)

FORCED ENTRY – This is faster hardcore, with some pretty slow breakdowns. There is a barked vocal, touching on the police state, modern life in America, and just basic choices. There is a theme song (which I always appreciate!) about breaking into *your home*. "I am pro burglary with no respect for property." There is very complicated packaging that one must break into. I pretty much broke the tape breaking into the tape, and had to finish the review on their site after a failed repair job. The artwork is a great drawing of a man tackling another man while the tackled disintegrates. (Mike) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, forcedentry.bandcamp.com)

GRAVE DISGRACE – Crushing Russian doom metal with pure power tenor vocals. They never accelerate beyond a reluctant crawl, and the vox put them in league with PENTAGRAM and VITUS… and no, that's not just hyperbole. If you like to be pummeled, repeatedly. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, reforestationrecords.bandcamp.com)

HANGMEN ALSO DIE – Grating hardcore with a searing guitar attack and dual high/low vocals. The presentation actually kinda makes me wince, which means that these monkeys are doing their job, if their job is making perfectly ugly music. Just a blazing, all out attack with little in the way of nuance to get in the way. Lyrics express disgust with society, but in a way that makes it clear that the band is thinking and aware and in a way that makes you hate society as well. Members of NAILBITER, NÜ-KLEAR BLAST SUNTAN and the SKUDS amongst others…and the guitar solo in "The Lines Have Been Drawn, Please Don't Try To Snort It" is a killer. (Robert) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, $5.50ppd c/o Microphonic Meltdown Tapes, 4926 NE Fremont St., Portland, OR 97213, hangmenalsodie.bandcamp.com)

LONE RANGER – Who knew that I would be listening to budget rock from upstate NY in 2016? Here we are in the future sounding just like the past! This sounds like it could have come out on Rip Off or Super*Teem in 1992. Sometimes the sound is so muddy that I can't tell if they're playing an organ or a harmonica or neither. If you like that style of garage punk though, *this is really good*. It's fun and shit-fi and has character in a genre of punk that just sounds like oldies bullshit these days. Go for it. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, jrestepan@gmail.com, lonerangeralbany.bandcamp.com)

LYSOL – *On the Corner* – This band works fast. I feel like they just started about five minutes ago, but they already put out a demo, went on a US tour and now have this tape out. They build on the sound of their past, but branch out into a wilder rock territory. Live, I feel like the band gives off the vibe of what it might have felt like to see the STOOGES in 1970, but filtered down into the mutant punk house show scene of 2015. This tape is a perfect representation of that and has all the energy of their live set, which is no small feat. Their singer is unhinged in a way that is crucial for pulling off a band like this…and their drummer plays like an animal. Excellent tape. Excellent band. (Greg) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, perennialdeath.com)

MR. AND THE MRS. – *Sink Your Teeth Like Ships* – Two-piece band from Hillsdale, Kansas. Gritty aggressive melodic vocals, pretty simple two or three chord punk rock over surf beats, this very clearly sounds like two people. It's fun banging punk with plenty of catchy riffs and hummable hooks. Great house party band. (Michael) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, mrandthemrs.bandcamp.com)

MUTANT SCUM – *Field Recordings* – Slime themed mid-tempo metal punk dirges. Snarling vocals and meaty guitars, they just can't seem to settle on an approach. The intro is a churning proto-crust burner, but the style meanders towards '90s East Bay hardcore and then they settle into sludge/stoner dirge. All of these things are good, mind you, so this is more of an observation than a complaint. Presentation and theme are excellent, with an informational leaflet, stickers…and a packet of scum. Actual scum. It's green. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, c/o Handstand Records, PO Box 110398, Brooklyn, NY 11211, handstandrecords.com, sewernyc.org)

NAÏVE SENSE – *Art Failures* – This trans-fronted Minneapolis four-piece melds hardcore, synth punk and grindcore in a convulsive, damaged jumble that seems to owe some inspiration to early BLOOD BROTHERS. Heavy distorted bass rules here, holding down the tracks while synth sounds sputter throughout. Dreamy delay guitar stabs melodically between death metal breakdowns while nightmarish screams rip through each song. This wouldn't sound out of place coming out on Sound Virus or Gold Standard Labs. (Sean) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, naivesense.bandcamp.com, 1901 Lyndale Ave S #8 Minneapolis, MN 55403 USA)

POHJASAKKA – *Kidutusta ja Pelkoa* – Official reissue for this seminal Suomi punk band, dubbed from the original masters from their second 7" dating back to 1986. Five tracks of crashing, catchy, pissed off hardcore punk. It's raging and stripped down, but with enough distortion, weight and grit to make it sound perfectly Punk. On tracks like "Taistelva" ("Struggle") and "Paskiaisen Kova Kohtalo" (which means "Shithead's Hard Destiny," a fantastic name for a punk song) the chaotic dynamism just bursts at the seams, the singer spitting, the bass truly tripping you up with intensity, and the hyper-energetic drums battering away and holding the manic groove throughout. The power of three chords shines on "Narkkis" ("Junkie") with its upbeat riff, brooding bass and sing-along chorus. A total classic from start to finish. (Lydia) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, Aftermath Tapes, c/o Igor Kljaić, Petriva 36, 10000, Zagreb, Croatia, prisonerof_state@yahoo.com)

S.H.I.T. – *Protection Of Leather And Lace: S.H.I.T. Live At The Silver Dollar 10.23.15* – The records are great, and their stripped down stomps are even better live…so why not drop a live tape while you salivate for the next slab of wax? Done. Good quality recording, solid and unhinged performance from 2015's Not Dead Yet fest in Toronto, this tape comes pretty close to capturing the fury. (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info)

SICK WARD – *Into The Future* – Powerful, hook-laden punk from Seattle. Style-wise, I'd liken this to Riot City bands and more contemporary street punk stuff like CRIMINAL DAMAGE. The production is great: huge vocals and guitars right up front and a solid rhythm section. This would fit a 45RPM 12" appropriately, but they've chosen the cheaper and faster route, which is great. Top notch. (Matt) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, sick.ward@hotmail.com)

SIRENA VICTIMA – *Without Masters* – Bay Area garage pop. Breathy female vox that are rarely the focus, and the band has an understated, distant approach. Almost sounds like they're holding something back, which makes me anxious to hear the next chapter. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, sirenvictima.bandcamp.com)

SLIME FLOWER – Twenty-two effortlessly written songs. The singer sounds exactly like DANIEL JOHNSTON but with a jangly garage pop backing band. With so much material they really cover a broad range of emotion, from banging punk to darker almost post-punk reflections, and of course acoustic solo songs that range from bright and positive folk to somber introverted confessions. He's someone who's clearly got a lot on his mind and if you want to ask him what he's thinking about be ready for a long full answer. (Michael) (22-song cassette, lyrics not included, slimeflower.bandcamp.com)

SPASTIC PANTHERS – Breakneck herky-jerky skate punk from Calgary. A circle pit of thrashers carving up some highspeed skate-slam. Done almost as soon as you hit play. (Sean) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, spasticpanthers.bandcamp.com, Handsome Dan Records 3244 31A Ave SE Calgary, AB CANADA,T2B 0H9)

PETER STUBB – *Booby Moss Grindcore Jam* – One-man drum machine noise/grind. I mean, you're either in or out at this point, right? All over the map, PETER STUBB (who should not be a secret to fans of nonsensical outsider music) dishes out a dizzying array of noise, grindcore and primitive punk, with a few surprising forays into melodic, anthemic punk that make you wonder what ANDREW WK might be like if he had never left his bedroom. Lyrics not included, just a collage of boobies, but thankfully the song titles just seem amateurish and not overtly misogynist. "A New Phone, A New God 4 U," "Don't Die Like A Rockstar" and "Garlic Gas" are some of this reviewer's faves. (Robert) (24-song cassette, lyrics not included, $3ppd c/o Peter Stubb, 113 Mallory Dr. Apt. A, Dalton, GA 30721)

SUCKLE – SUCKLE is from Gainesville, FL and they play blown-out, noisy, chaotic synth punk. At times, it's like the SCREAMERS with none of the restraint or dynamics and women singing instead. Most of the songs feature a drum machine and it seems like the band hasn't quite figured out how to make it stop when they do, so that can be good or bad, depending on where your priorities lie. I prefer the live drums, which make the band sound insane, lurching and chaotic. Vocals are screamed though multiple people in the band. The whole thing is like an overbearing nightmare, which is cool. Apparently they already broke up. (Greg) (6–song cassette, lyrics not included, sucklesuckle.bandcamp.com, 212 SE 7th St., Apt #2, Gainesville, FL 32601)

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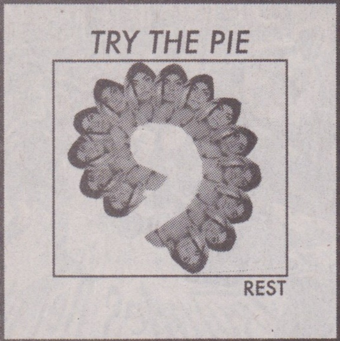

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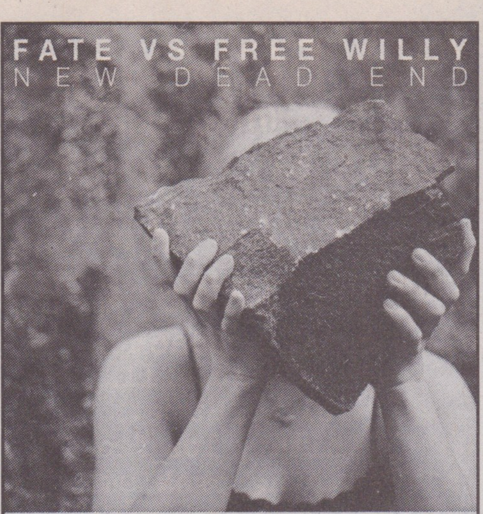

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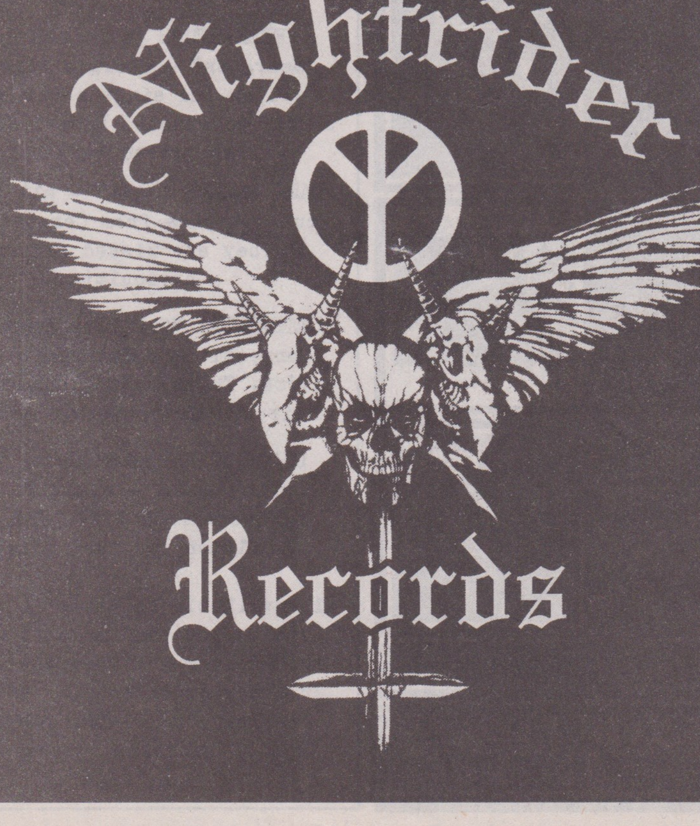

DEAD TANK

The Elsinores "New Forms" LP
Sophomore LP from this bleak and nervy trio from Kentucky.
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Bleed The Pigs / Thetan split LP
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Virgin Flower "Absence of Essence" Tape
The Siege Fire "Dead Refuge" LP
Cloud Rat "Qliphoth" Tape
Decades/Failures "G00DBY3" LP
Post Teens / Rose Cross 7"
Thou "Ceremonies of Humiliation" 3xLP

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ZINES

Send zines for review to:
Maximum Rocknroll
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San Francisco, CA 94146

Reviewers:
(AP) Ari Perezdiez
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EC) E. Conner
(EW) Eli Wald
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(JB) Julia Booz
(JD) Justin Davisson
(JM) Jeff Mason
(MM) Marissa Magic

AJATUKSEN VALO #12–14
80–88 pgs
We received the three most recent issues of this hefty, Finnish-language zine. Each one has plenty of band interviews and music reviews, with no ads. According to the nice note (in English) from the editor Jouni, the bands covered are mostly but not exclusively punk. None seem to be big rock artists or reunion cash-ins. Many of the photos are on a black background, giving them a pleasantly dingy appearance. Some reproduce very well, while others are a bit faded or blurred, seemingly on purpose, which gives a nice variety to the layout. There's a recurring panda theme, including a comic of some pandas getting drunk. The thirteenth issue focuses on his old hometown. He says it's an awful place, but he seems to have gotten quite a lot of content out of it, including talks with long-gone and current bands. In issue fourteen, amongst much else he calls out "old and bitter punks" who talk pointless shit on the current scene. It's hard for me to imagine any Finnish readers will get turned onto this zine from a review (such as it is) in *MRR*, but I would encourage anyone interested to look for *Ajatuksen Valo*. They look cool as hell and a ton of work went into them. More are in the works. (JM)
avzine.bigcartel.com / Kappalaisenkuja 1, 33700 Tampere, FINLAND

AS YOU WERE #4
$10 / 120 pgs
This issue is subtitled "Living Situations" and in it, thirty or so artists rant about disgusting punk houses, shitty roommates, and even a childhood haunted house. Chances are, if you've read any punk publication in the last ten years, you'll recognize a slew of these artists. Sometimes, while dwelling on this topic, it's easy to write punks off as disgusting slobs who never do the dishes and skip town when rent is due, and I guess I can't say that's an unfair call. This is pretty hilarious, takes slight jabs at all our imperfections, and it's still pretty punk. This is my favorite in this series, and this time Silver Sprocket also teamed up with Last Gasp. Sweet! (DZ)
silversprocket.net / 1057 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94146

BABA YAGA BURNS PARIS TO THE GROUND
20 pgs
You've always wanted feminist history lessons about the mythical women who fought the rich in France last century, witch hunts, Baba Yaga and fairy tales generally—you just didn't realize it until now. Some are politically fabricated lies, some originate from folktales told enough times to seem true. This zine focuses on myths of women who used fire to fight their enemies, or strike fear into their hearts at least. It's very interesting and very well written: thoroughly reasoned and rhetorical with a lot of supporting evidence. There are some lovely illustrations by the hired cartoonists who helped fabricate the mythological entities, as well as the pictures that go with fairy tales. Highly recommended. (JB)
Wren Awry, 2545 N. Geronimo Apt 9, Tucson, AZ 85705 / seamsandstory@gmail.com

CRETINS OF DISTORTION #8
$5 / 21 pgs
The eighth issue of *Cretins of Distortion* is bookended with epigrams from Doc Dart and Ron House; in between it's all of the sickest *new* punk out of the Midwest. If you've been keeping track, *COD #7* was a comprehensive review of '70s and '80s Ohio punk; this issue is all new. It is similarly exhaustive and rigorous (Emmy has *no time* for internet punks or lazy Devo comparisons), but thankfully is not too self-serious. Half the CCTV interview in here is about CiCi's Pizza, one of those gross and incomprehensible Midwest institutions with which punks are forced to interact. Another one of those institutions is Big Ten football, which still somehow dominates the culture of Midwestern college towns and sets the absurd foreground of this issue's interview with the Chicago punks of the Bug. This issue also includes several legal-size pages worth of demo and record reviews and a 700-something-word essay on the new Tenement double LP with no paragraph breaks. It's all spread out in what is probably the best-looking music zine out there. Obviously *MRR* is staffed by a bunch of *Cretins* superfans, but that's no reason to not send them your money immediately. (EW)
bugcartel.storenvy.com / emmyeatsbutts@gmail.com / 2656 Dayton Ave, Columbus, OH 43202

CUNT LOVE
32 pgs
Feminism has a rich and varied history. It's also a history rife with conflict and derision, from CIA operative Gloria Steinem to women like Angela Davis and Assata Shakur who were targeted by the CIA like to the modern voices of intersectionality like Janet Mock whose work somehow manages to stand in the same contemporary theoretical arena as the gender essentialist gaping maw of Cathy Brennan. With all of these approaches there is a deep well of history and analysis to draw from. *Cunt Love* is an attempt at self-love through corporal reassessment. There is a real thing where the bodies of women are vilified and turned to mystery. I would argue that this isn't because of what is actually between your legs but rather any narrative control of the lives and desires of women by women no matter what is between their legs. Ya dig? There's also this idea that it's perfectly chill and understandable to hate your body and so like just don't stress if you do. (EC)
swapwaterrevolution@gmail.com

CYBORG LEGS
$5 / 16 pgs
This is an exhaustively detailed story about the arrival to and departure from the writing of a poem. An excruciating play by play of waking up going to work going home and falling asleep and waking up and going to work and going home and falling asleep and so on and so forth. The repetitive dullness of the writing makes you feel the bleakness that I think everyone is familiar with. In the end it runs into a psychedelic escape fantasy lacking any kind of revenge plot. It is good. (MM)
omgpress.tumblr.com

HARDCORE ARCHITECTURE
39 pgs
For the uninitiated: *Hardcore Architecture* uses band addresses as listed in the reviews section of '80s issues of *Maximum Rocknroll* to capture photos of these bands' homes with Google Street View. I first saw the project online; the images are presented on a Tumblr page along with excerpts from each review. You can pore through pages and pages of these, or contemplate one of these photos as it pops up on your dash. *Hardcore Architecture* was destined to blow up online, but to me it makes a lot of sense in print. In this zine, the images are grouped thematically rather than geographically or chronologically. There are a lot of what are obviously the family houses these bands played in as teenagers, but also spreads of NYC streetscapes, imposing public housing towers, the many homes of Poison Idea, etc. The project's coordinator, Marc Fischer has an introduction here detailing his own history as a teenage *MRR* reader and

zine editor. This intro helps to make clear the project's central irony: in conjunction with the USPS, zines like *MRR* made it easier than ever for young punks to communicate and reach each other, but nonetheless the participants in these conversations had no way of picturing exactly how and where they lived. It is definitely gratifying to read anyone that was around in the '80s talk about *MRR* in the present tense, though this project in and of itself highlights that the internet itself has assumed some of the functions this magazine performed in the past. As a network, directory, and public forum for punks worldwide, *MRR* was certainly cohesive and close to comprehensive but not as immediate as the internet is now. Still, one of the things this project illuminates is how punk—especially in collaborative efforts such as this magazine—linked and links a huge variety of settings and locations. *Hardcore Architecture* has expanded into a series of zines doing long-form interviews with participants such as Les Evans (of crossover band Cryptic Slaughter) and Bill Daniel (photographer, installation and video artist, Butthole Surfers roadie) further exploring punk's roadways and webs of possibility. (EW)
halfletterpress.com / hardcorearchitecture.tumblr.com

***INTERGALACTIC SHE DEVILS* #1 and #2**
$2 / 20 pgs and 18 pgs
Comic zine that involves Rinola and Miala, two space alien ladies that go up against the U.S. Military. Nothing too in-depth storyline wise but some pretty good facial expressions and use of pointillism as well as solid use of the word "Kablammmo!!" Worth checking out if you're obsessed with all things space aliens – especially the ones that look like The Greys. Issue #2 continues the story with another fight between the two space alien ladies and the flyboys of the military. I won't spoil the rest but this issue has some really good landscape panels and swooshing spaceship action. (JD)
rlvaill@yahoo.com / facebook.com/intergalacticshedevils2015

***MILKFIST* #1**
156 pgs
Quite a serious "tome." The table of contents divides this into Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry, and the Gallery. There is so much to read, it's a little daunting. I think this is what they call an art magazine. It's pretty fucking cool. There is a huge variety to the content, including academic-y essays and odd, interesting drawings, as well as a particularly good interview with Justin Pearson from Swing Kids and the Locust. Apparently this giant and beautiful magazine was put together with the help of GoFundMe. Not that I'm saying anything in particular about that truth, just that maybe it will help you understand the scope of the project. It probably took a year or so to put together. My impressions are that it is dark, cheeky, intelligent, and kind of erudite. Probably the product of College. Like, in the most generic sense of the word. (JB)
milkfist.com

NONSERVI.AM
$6 / 32 pgs
This is a zine of personal writing. At times violent, absurd or nostalgic the writing is pretty worthwhile. I however cannot wrap my mind around what would possess someone to make nice silkscreened covers on fancy paper of a drawing of a bunch of minions (those tiny little yellow cartoon men in overalls). (MM)
sisterinchrist.space

***RAZORCAKE* #89**
$4 / 111 pgs
This issue seems to be a departure in terms of content for the long-running magazine. Perhaps *Razorcake* is working to change its image of SoCal bro pop punk into something more worldly applicable? If you're unfamiliar with the magazine it's not a whole lot different of a concept from the one you're holding in your hands. There are reviews, columns, and interviews, all about the punk miasma. This issue features a girthy interview with Total Control as well as Ohio's Nervosas and a sweet oral history of the Slits with former bassist Tessa Pollitt. Along with the other aforementioned recurring bits these features make for a solid issue. (EC)
razorcake.org / PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042

***SMALL HOURS* #3**
35 pgs
This mag has a real early aughts perzine thing going on. Short emotionally clean stories about nostalgia butting up against the cold daily trials of everyday life. Scientific charts and prints speckle the pages. This guy probably needs a pen pal (EC)
batkie@wisc.edu

***SODA KILLERS* #10**
30 pgs
This zine is right up my alley. A shit ton of reviews, most of which are records, but also shows, record stores in Minneapolis, Portland and Seattle, and a few burrito spots in Minneapolis (but why Whole Foods?). The record reviews are informed and descriptive without being pretentious, use exactly as many or few words are needed to get the point across, and cover both current punk and rap stuff. As someone who listens to as much Gang Starr as Discharge these days, I appreciate when both genres are in the same place without being appropriative. The show reviews are extremely detailed (down to "I turned off the basketball game to head to the White Lung show") and are also nerdy enough to include setlists. There are also a lot of cool graffiti pictures throughout the zine, which I wish were a little less grey in their reproduction. Will definitely be keeping my eye on future issues. (DG)
hotdogdayz.com

***TONE DEAF ROOSTER* #1**
$2–$3 / 26 pgs
This zine makes you work for the effort. It is half-size landscape zine, with most of the text being close to too small for my 20/125 vision to handle unassisted, and I can't tell if I can't take or just don't get some of the art, but it's well put together and untempered by modern technology. You get esoteric collages, write-ups of obscure late '70s/early '80s books, Dead Moon in Brooklyn, Half Japanese '70s garagers Llygod, pics of a few bands and someone skating a quarter pipe in Pittsburgh, the Mozart demo, and whatever else he's into at the moment. Text by stamp, hand, and rub-on letter. The writing style is a little pretentious, but I'll let it slide. (DG)
Dave Hyde, PO Box 1407, New York, NY 10163

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW LIFE WITH YOU BEING HAPPY
$7 / 32 pgs
Let me begin by saying that the blurb on the back describes this zine as a book. It has an ISBN number. If you have ever read anything I've written ever, you know that I hate ISBN numbers. Why can't people pick a fucking side? Are you underground or are you trying to sell your "self-published" publication at Borders? Does Borders still exist? I realize that I am writing in a zine that is definitely at Borders if there is still a Borders. But whatever. This "book" AKA "chapbook" is fucking poetry, and its definitely good poetry. Good enough to not seem like poetry I guess. Because it's so diary-ish I heavy-sighed a lot but it made me consider things from a different perspective than I otherwise might have. For example, she says with conviction that we should forgive our rapists. Or anyway, that's what she thinks is best for her and not every victim's choice. She used an infographic of a baby tee with Barbie font, like it's the '90s and we're at a Hole concert. I spend a lot of time thinking about our collective rapists and I do appreciate her considerations. The blurb on the back also says "she demands to be taken seriously while also not giving a fuck what you think." I agree with the last part but I don't think she is taking herself that seriously. This poetry is filled with self-exploration, mad love, indifference to the shitty world, and bodily fluids. She is clever, funny, thoughtful, and haughty about her surroundings at the expense of nobody in particular. Reading the description of trying to argue with her teacher about her being pro-life—"I realized I was one of the very few pro-choice students in my religion class. My teacher was tall and blonde and reminded me of Ann Coulter. What anti-depressant was I taking then? I think it was post-Lexapor and pre-Zoloft. Wellbutrin, yeah"—I feel that I can party with this person. Aren't personal zines about making those connections? There is a turning point in the process where she is no longer gloating about being so in love and she becomes a real person who has anger and problems and cool things to say about them. Not at all a waste of your dollars. (JB)
pioneerspress.com

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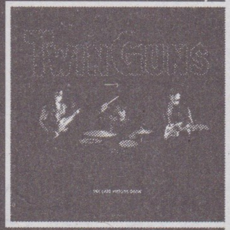

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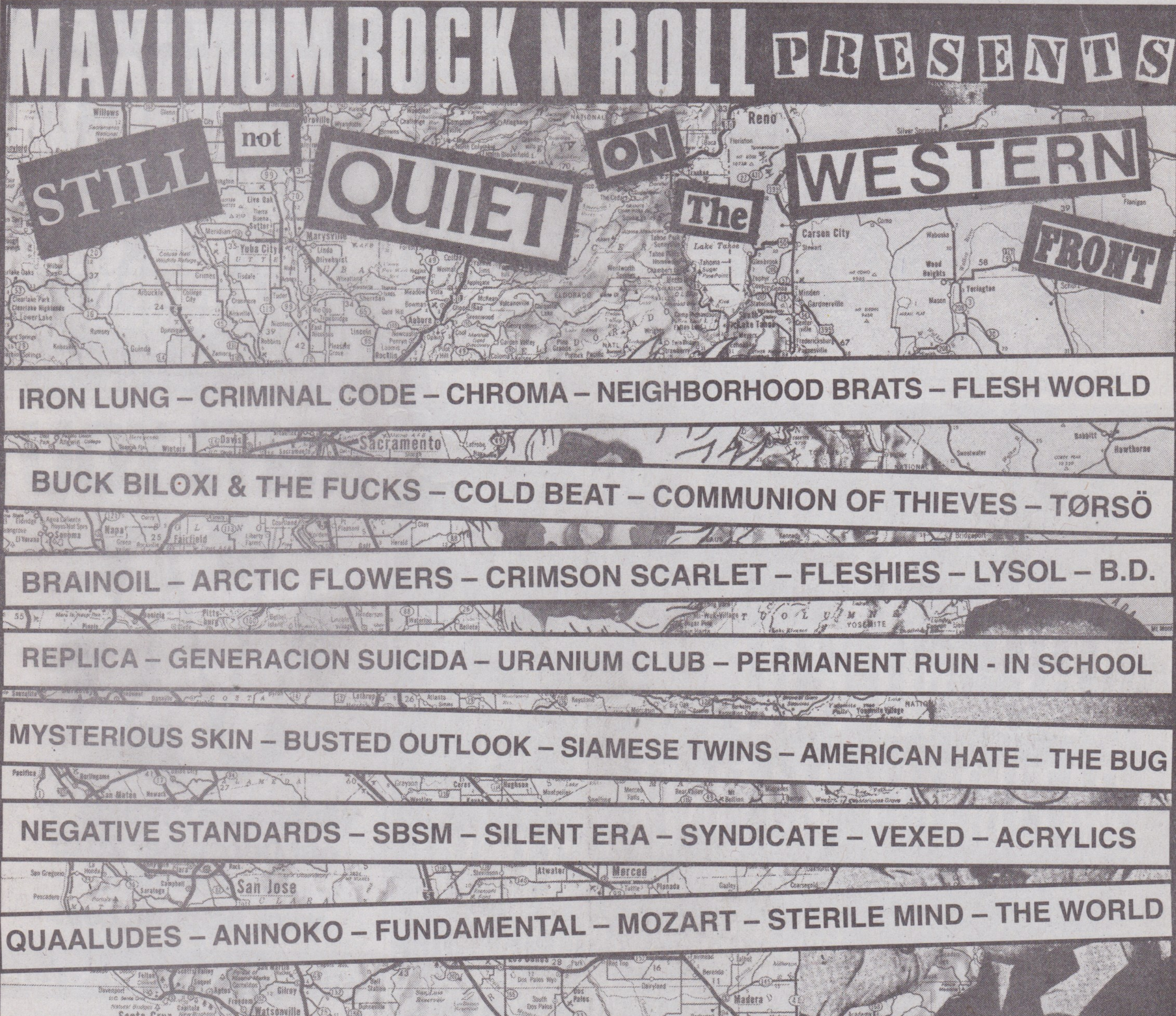
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